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# HOLY BAPTISM.

## A MANUAL OF INSTRUCTION

FOR

# ADULT CANDIDATES

FOR

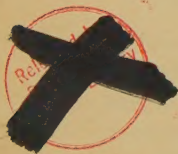
## Holy Baptism.

BY THE REV.

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RECTOR OF FENNY COMPTON, WARWICKSHIRE,  
AND HONORARY CANON OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."—Acts xxii. 16.



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# H O L Y   B A P T I S M,

&c.

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## PART I.

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### I N T R O D U C T I O N.

ABOUT thirty years ago, a large iron-work was established in a remote part of an extensive parish; and to this another and another were soon added, insomuch that in a little time the houses of the workmen grew into a town of some size. Unhappily, while houses were raised as quickly as they were required, and while shops and beer-shops kept pace with the houses, and even schools, in some instances, were set on foot, no adequate provision was made for the spiritual wants of the new district. The parish church was at the distance of three or four miles, and the hands of its clergyman were filled with the work found him by the population which lay around it, and which was already too large for one man. Over-exertion and grief at the thought, that, with all his efforts, he could not reach those who, while placed under his care, were growing up in ignorance of religion, (whatever their knowledge of secular matters,) and in vice, broke his health, and at

length carried him to his grave. The clergyman who followed him seemed likely to share the same fate, when he was removed to a less weighty charge. After some years, however, it pleased God to put it into the heart of one of the wealthy owners of the iron-works to consider, that, as he and his fellow proprietors had brought this population together, and placed them where they were, so it was their bounden duty to do what they could to provide for their spiritual welfare. By his persuasions and exertions a church was built, and a clergyman appointed. But years of neglect had not passed without leaving traces of themselves on every side. And the new clergyman found, among many other tokens of the deplorable state of things in his new charge, that not a few of his parishioners were unbaptized.

The clergyman's first aim with these persons was to stir up in them a desire to be Christ's servants in sincerity and truth. He felt that if this were wanting Baptism could profit them nothing. They would but mock God, in receiving it, with vain professions and unmeaning promises, and bring down a curse upon themselves instead of a blessing. Whereas, if a sincere desire to become Christ's servants were once kindled, they would often, he hoped, be beforehand with him in requesting Baptism of their own accord. The result proved that his hope was well founded. They had learnt enough upon the subject, even indirectly, to make them repeat, almost in the very words, the eunuch's question; "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized<sup>1</sup>?"

In the eunuch's case, Baptism was administered immediately on his making the request. Philip, who baptized him, had already had sufficient proof of his sincerity, and of his fitness for Baptism. He had been pointed out to Philip by express revelation of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, he was returning to his own distant

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 36.



country, and this was, possibly, the only opportunity of receiving Baptism he might ever have. In the cases I am referring to, time was not so urgent; and it was the clergyman's custom to take much pains in preparing the candidates. It was not often that several cases occurred together, so as to admit of set addresses. Most of what was done, was done in the way of earnest conversation with each, as his case arose. The following pages, however, are an attempt to put together, into somewhat of an orderly form, the substance of his instructions and exhortations, such as they were delivered to the more intelligent of the candidates.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM.

I NEED not spend much time, he would say to them, in showing you the necessity of your being baptized. You are already anxious to become Christ's servants, and God's servants as Christ's. And you know that Baptism is the ordinance which Christ Himself has appointed for admitting men into His service. However you may wish to be Christ's servants, and intend to be Christ's servants, you are not such actually and in reality, till you have been baptized.

Long before the sacrament of Baptism was expressly instituted, our Lord declared the necessity of it in His conversation with Nicodemus. Nicodemus had a desire to become one of His disciples; but he would fain have been a disciple in secret. He had come to Jesus by night, as being afraid to have it known that he came. Our Lord's words, which seem abrupt, if they be looked at merely as a reply to Nicodemus's declaration, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him,"

evidently glanced beyond that to the spirit and temper by which Nicodemus was actuated, and intimated that something more was necessary than a mere conviction held in secret, such as Nicodemus here acknowledged: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus did not understand what our Lord meant by being born again. "How can a man be born," he asked, "when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" On which our Lord continued, again introducing His declaration with that double "verily," which was always intended to draw especial attention to His words: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God<sup>2</sup>." Here He taught Nicodemus, that, whatever a man's belief might be, he could not actually become His servant but by being "born again," "born of water and of the Spirit." For, seeing that our Lord joined the two, water and the Spirit, together, He evidently intimated that the one was not ordinarily to be had but in the use of the other; that a man could not hope to be born of the Spirit, except by receiving that Baptism which is administered with water.

In this way did our Lord declare the necessity of Baptism, long before He instituted that ordinance as the Sacrament of admission into the Christian covenant. His words, when He did institute it, were so express, that even if any measure of darkness still hid the full meaning of the expressions He had used to Nicodemus, that darkness was thenceforward driven away for ever: "Go ye, therefore, and teach (that is, make disciples of) all nations," was His solemn commission to His Apostles,—"Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 2. 5.

you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen<sup>3</sup>.” In these words our Lord expressly appointed Baptism as the Sacrament for admitting men into the number of His disciples. And how then can any one expect to be acknowledged by Him as a disciple who neglects to seek admission in the Sacrament which He has appointed for that end?

On another occasion, if indeed it was another<sup>4</sup>, we find our Lord repeating His commission to His Apostles, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;” and then adding a declaration which again pointed out most distinctly the necessity of Baptism, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned<sup>5</sup>.” It is true, that faith, which is here joined with Baptism, is the point of main importance, the very life of Baptism, if we may so say; insomuch that without faith, (at least where the person is old enough to be capable of faith,) Baptism is of no avail: and, doubtless, in those cases where there is a true and lively faith, and yet no opportunity afforded of receiving Baptism, the want of Baptism, it being no wilful want, will be no bar to admission into God’s kingdom. But otherwise, where Baptism may be had, and is, notwithstanding, refused or neglected, what warrant can any man have for expecting that he shall find favour in the sight of God? He may talk of his faith as he will, and lay what stress he will upon it; but it is very plain that it is not faith of that kind which God will own, seeing that it can stand with wilful and deliberate disobedience to his Lord’s command.

These passages are so express that I will not weaken their force by dwelling longer upon the point in question. I will only observe, that the whole history of the

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

<sup>4</sup> The commission recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, was given in Galilee (ver. 16). It has been supposed by some that that recorded in Mark xvi. 15, 16, was delivered at Bethany immediately before our Lord ascended.

<sup>5</sup> Mark xvi. 15, 16.

first founding of Christ's religion is exactly what from these passages was to have been expected. Whenever any one was converted to the faith of Christ, and wished to become a Christian, he was baptized as a matter of course. Whatever proof he might have given of his sincerity, or whatever tokens he might have received of God's favour and acceptance, these made no difference. He was still to be baptized, that, by Baptism, he might be made formally and actually, what he already was virtually and in intention, God's servant. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we<sup>6</sup>?" asked St. Peter, in regard to Cornelius and those who were with him. Their having received the Holy Ghost, and their having been thus pointed out, as it were, by voice from heaven, as accepted in the sight of God, so far from being a reason why Baptism should be dispensed with, as unnecessary, was urged by St. Peter as an unanswerable reason why it should be administered. And St. Paul's case was of a like description. Ananias, who was sent to him, had already been told by the Lord, in a vision, that he was a chosen vessel appointed to bear His name before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. Here was proof enough that God had accepted him. Yet, for all this, he must be formally admitted by the appointed Sacrament of Baptism into that service to which he was already engaged and dedicated in intention and design. "And now why tarriest thou?" Ananias said to him. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord<sup>7</sup>."

This, then, is the necessity of Baptism: our Lord has appointed it as the solemn, formal rite of admission into His service. This is reason enough, even though no other reason could be given.

Under the Jewish dispensation, Circumcision held the place which Baptism does under the Christian. It

<sup>6</sup> Acts x. 47.

<sup>7</sup> Acts ix. 15 ; xxii. 16.



was, by God's appointment, the solemn, formal rite of admission to his service, while that dispensation lasted. Every male was required to be circumcised; and if any one were without Circumcision, that soul was to be "cut off from his people<sup>s</sup>." He might be an Israelite by birth, he might be an Israelite by education, he might be an Israelite in heart and affection; still the threatening of God was express. He should have no part nor lot in the inheritance of Jacob. He did not belong to the covenant. God would not own him as His servant. The whole tenour of the New Testament shows that the case is precisely the same with regard to Baptism. Be the man who refuses the ordinance who he may, and his attainments what they may, he cuts himself off by his own act from God's covenant. He rejects all part and lot in God's inheritance.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF BAPTISM.

BAPTISM is the solemn and formal admission of individuals into covenant with God in Christ; that is, into the Christian covenant. God condescends in this particular, as in many others, to human infirmity. In covenants between man and man, at least where any thing of importance is at stake, the use of some outward and visible form, which may serve not only to bear witness to the covenant, but also to give it effect, and make it binding on both parties, seems of almost universal prevalence. We have many such usages in this country. If one man agrees to sell, and another to buy, an estate, the agreement does not take effect till both parties have, before witnesses, signed their names, and affixed their seals, to certain writings setting forth the nature of the transaction.

<sup>s</sup> Gen. xvii. 14.

The signing of the names and affixing of the seals constitutes the solemn, formal conveyance of the property from the one to the other. The marriage ceremony, to take another instance, is the solemn, formal ratification of a covenant between the persons married. How much soever they may have regarded themselves before as plighted to one another, yet they are not man and wife, they do not really possess an interest in each other, till the one has given, and the other has received, the ring, and God's minister has blessed them both in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptism answers essentially the same purpose in respect to the great Christian covenant, as the setting of the hands and seals of the contracting parties in the former of these instances, and the giving and receiving of the ring in the latter. The chief points of difference are these: first, that whereas, in the instances referred to, the covenants are severally between man and man, in Baptism the covenant is between God and man; and secondly, that whereas, in the instances referred to, the benefits contracted for are temporal benefits, and such as relate only to the present world, in Baptism they are spiritual and eternal benefits. These, I say, are the chief points of difference. But they are points of such infinite importance, that they at once raise Baptism immeasurably above all forms of ratification which belong to merely human covenants. Even Circumcision, which held the same place in regard to the Jewish dispensation, which Baptism does in regard to the Christian, and which belonged to a covenant, to which, as in the baptismal covenant, God was one of the parties, was inferior to Baptism in this respect, that the covenant to which it belonged was a subordinate, temporary covenant; and the benefits which it conveyed, therefore, were subordinate, temporary benefits<sup>9</sup>. If in

<sup>9</sup> See Heb. viii. 6, &c. 2 Cor. iii. 6, &c. Gal. iii. 15, &c. This, I apprehend, is the essential difference between Baptism and Circumcision: the covenants to which they respectively admitted were different. The

any instances the benefits were of a higher and more enduring description, they were such, not by virtue of the covenant to which Circumcision belonged, but in anticipation of that "better covenant, established upon better promises," to which the covenant under which they were given was intended to minister.

Remember, then, that Baptism is the solemn and formal ratification, as far as each individual baptized is concerned, of the great Christian covenant. That covenant was ratified generally and once for all when the blood of Christ, "the blood of the new covenant," "the blood of the everlasting covenant," was shed upon the cross, just as the covenant at Sinai was ratified generally and once for all when Moses sprinkled both the book, in which he had written the words of the Lord, and all the people, with the blood of the calves and goats which had been offered in sacrifice<sup>1</sup>: but it is ratified with individuals, when each is solemnly and formally admitted into it in the sacrament of Baptism, just as the covenant at Sinai was ratified with

one is an "everlasting covenant," the other was a temporary covenant; the one conveys spiritual and eternal benefits, the other conveyed carnal and transitory benefits.

In strictness, indeed, Circumcision was the seal of the covenant which God made with Abraham. And that covenant was, as St. Paul teaches us in his Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. iii. 16, 17), the very Gospel covenant itself. But then it was the Gospel covenant, so to speak, in embryo. And from the time that the Law was given at Mount Sinai till the Gospel covenant was ratified by the shedding of the blood of Christ, ("the blood of the everlasting covenant," Heb. xiii. 20), upon the cross, the covenant made at Mount Sinai, that is, the Law, was the covenant under which the Jews were held (Gal. iii. 23, 24), and into which they were admitted by Circumcision. (See Gal. v. 3.) The Law was, for the time being, the form under which the covenant made with Abraham was developed. It was a temporary form, which, when "THE SEED should come to whom the promise was made," was to give place to the Gospel; and then the covenant made with Abraham was to assume its just proportions, and to stand in full force. And thereupon Baptism took the place of Circumcision. So that if one should say that the two ordinances belonged to the same covenant, it would be true in this sense,—that Circumcision admitted to the covenant in its embryo, temporary form, Baptism to the covenant in its matured, lasting form.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxiv. 5, &c.; and Heb. ix. 18, &c.

individuals, when each was solemnly and formally admitted into it in the ordinance of Circumcision.

Now when a covenant is ratified, one purpose answered by the act which ratifies it is, that the benefits of the covenant are solemnly and formally made over to the respective parties. These benefits were already theirs virtually and in intention; now they are theirs actually. To go back to one of the illustrations used just now:—Suppose one man has agreed to sell an estate, and another to buy it, for a definite sum. From the moment the agreement is made, the one looks upon himself as having no longer an interest in it, the other looks upon himself as having an interest in it. Still the estate does not actually pass from the one to the other, till the deed of conveyance has been duly signed and sealed by the contracting parties and their witnesses. The moment *that* is done the transfer is complete. The one ceases to be the owner, the other becomes the owner. This, then, is the effect of Baptism. On the one part, the person baptized does, in and by Baptism, renounce all former lords who have had dominion over him, and yield up himself to God to be His servant; on the other part, God accepts the person baptized as His servant, and conveys and makes over to him, and gives him actual possession of, all the benefits of the new covenant, as far as he is at present capable of them.

And as Baptism is thus the instrument by which the benefits of the Christian covenant are conveyed and made over to us; so also is it a pledge and assurance that they are conveyed and made over. It is our pledge and assurance given to God, that we are become His servants, and will continue such: it is God's pledge and assurance given to us, that He accounts us as His servants, and that whatever blessings have been purchased for the sons of men by Christ's death are and shall be ours.

And as it is a pledge and assurance of these, so is it a witness and memorial of them likewise. It is a



witness and memorial to us that God has accepted us as His servants: it is a witness and memorial to God, that we have dedicated ourselves to His service.

The view now given of the nature and object of Baptism, is the most comprehensive that can be given. And accordingly, it will be found to include under it whatever other views belong properly to the subject. Is Baptism, for instance, as one of the two Christian Sacraments, described in the Church Catechism as “generally necessary to salvation?” It is obvious that that ordinance must be such, which serves for admission into the Gospel covenant apart from which no man can be saved. Is Baptism, again, as one of the two Christian Sacraments, said to be “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us” that we do receive it? All this also is included under the idea of an act appointed by Christ for the express purpose of ratifying that covenant, the object of which is to bestow grace on those who are admitted to it. For that which ratifies a covenant, while it is a means whereby the benefits of the covenant are conveyed and made over to the parties respectively interested in it, is at the same time a pledge and assurance to each that they are made over. Once more. Is Baptism, as was repeatedly said of it in the last chapter, represented as the appointed ordinance for admitting men into Christ’s service? It is plainly such, as being the appointed ordinance for admitting men into that covenant, the very terms of which are, that, as they dedicate themselves to Christ’s service, on the one hand, so Christ accepts and owns them as His servants, on the other.

It will be observed, perhaps, that much of what has been here said of Baptism might with equal truth have been said of the Lord’s Supper. And it is true. Both are ratifications of the great Christian covenant. The

difference between them lies in this, that Baptism ratifies that covenant when it is first entered into; the Lord's Supper, when from time to time it is renewed and confirmed. Baptism serves for admission into that goodly society which has Christ for its Head, the Church for its body, and all the saints for its members; the Lord's Supper for continuance in it.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH BAPTISM LAYS US UNDER.

IN the last chapter frequent mention was made of the great Christian covenant,—the new covenant, as it is sometimes called, to distinguish it from the covenant which God made with the Jewish people at Mount Sinai, and into which each individual among the Jews was admitted on his being circumcised. Baptism, as we have seen, answers the same purpose in regard to the Christian covenant, as Circumcision did in regard to the Jewish. It admits the person baptized into the Christian covenant; and, in so doing, both binds upon him the obligations of that covenant on the one hand, and on the other conveys and makes over to him its privileges.

I proceed to consider what these obligations and these privileges are. In the present chapter I shall confine myself to the former,—the obligations of the Christian covenant, the obligations which Baptism, by admitting us into that covenant, lays us under.

These may be stated in one word to be, the becoming God's servants. Whoever receives Baptism does thereby engage himself to be God's servant;—Christ's servant first, and, as Christ's servant, God's. By admitting us to Baptism God accepts us as His

servants; by receiving Baptism we engage ourselves to be God's servants.

And such we are not, any of us, before Baptism. A man may, it is true, do God's work in many particulars before Baptism; still he does not do it as God's servant. What he does may show his wish to serve God, and may be accepted of God as such; (as we read of Cornelius, that his prayers and his alms had gone up as a memorial before God<sup>2</sup>;) but it does not fall within the covenant, it is not covenant-work, if one may so say; nor is he entitled to the promises of the covenant.

That he has been brought so far, however, is owing to the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, who is thus drawing him to Christ, and in Christ to God. Naturally we are all the servants of another master. The devil is our master, and the work of the devil we do. When Adam broke God's command in Paradise, he not only made himself the devil's servant, but, in and with himself, he made all his descendants such to the end of time. The world into which we are born, so God has permitted, is the kingdom of Satan. And the grand object for which Christ came down from heaven, was that He might destroy Satan's kingdom, and translate us into His own, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God.

It is an awful thought, and one which few realize to any considerable extent, that every one in his natural state is the subject and slave of Satan. In the striking and emphatic language of Scripture, he is "dead in trespasses and sins," "walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience<sup>3</sup>."

When we say, then, that we solemnly engage ourselves in Baptism to become God's servants, this im-

<sup>2</sup> Acts x. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. ii. 1, 2.

plies, as a step previously necessary, that we renounce the service of that wicked spirit, who hitherto has had dominion over us. We cannot serve two masters.

Another thing implied in our engaging ourselves to be Christ's servants, is that we bind ourselves to believe whatever God, by Christ, has revealed to us. If God were merely an earthly master, indeed, fallible and liable to err, this would not necessarily follow upon our becoming His servants. We owe respect to the instruction of an earthly master, and that increasingly in proportion to his superior knowledge and wisdom; but we do not owe him implicit belief, because no earthly master is secure from falling into error. But God cannot err; God cannot be mistaken. And He is the Lord not only of our bodies, but of our spirits also. And we are as much bound to yield Him the entire and unquestioning subjection of the one, as the entire and unquestioning obedience of the other. Whatever He has revealed must be true; and we owe it to Him as well as to ourselves to receive it as true, and, as true, to let it have its full weight with us.

Our Lord and His Apostles uniformly speak of faith as the turning point of Christianity. Without it a man cannot be a Christian; and where it is present, and has its rightful influence, all Christian graces will follow.

A third thing implied in our engaging ourselves to be Christ's servants, is that we bind ourselves to obey Christ, and God in Christ, without reserve, forbearing whatsoever God by Christ forbids, doing whatsoever God by Christ commands. This so obviously belongs to the relationship into which we enter, that I need not stop to enlarge upon it.

These, then, are the obligations of the Christian covenant, the obligations under which we lay ourselves in our Baptism. We bind ourselves to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe whatsoever God by



Christ has revealed to us, and to do whatsoever God by Christ has commanded us.

But there is a difficulty which meets us at the outset. These obligations, it will be felt, are greater than we can undertake. We have not the power to free ourselves from the yoke and bondage of Satan. Even if we had the disposition to believe all that God has revealed, we are ignorant of much that He has revealed. We are not able to keep God's commandments.

This leads us, then, to the privileges of the Christian covenant; for it is a part of those privileges, that we are endued with grace by God for the performance of those very duties, to which by entering into the covenant we make ourselves liable.

---

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN COVENANT.

IF we should sum up the privileges of the Christian covenant in one word, they are, that Christ becomes to us our Head and Representative; or, as the same thing is expressed in our Church Catechism, we are "made members of Christ;" or, as the Apostle expresses it, "we are made members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones<sup>4</sup>:" so close and intimate is the union into which we are admitted.

The truth is, that it is with Christ, in the first instance, that God's covenant is made. He stands as the Head and Representative of His people. We become interested in it by being grafted into Christ. Then, whatsoever Christ has done, or suffered, or obtained, in reference to it, is made over to us, in and through Him, as though we had done, suffered, or obtained the same ourselves. In this sense it is, that Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant. God's

<sup>4</sup> Eph. v. 30.

covenant is with Christ in the first instance, and with us through Christ; with Christ immediately, with us mediately through Him.

And herein consists the security of that covenant. God cannot fail on His part; Christ cannot fail on His. The covenant is ordered in all things, and sure. "All the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us<sup>5</sup>."

Whatsoever promises, then, the Father made the Son, in that everlasting covenant, which was agreed upon before the foundations of the world were laid, and was ratified when the blood of Christ was shed upon the cross, these became ours through our being made members of Christ. They were made to Christ, not for Himself, but for His people in Him.

1. As the Father hath by covenant given<sup>6</sup> to Christ a kingdom, so we, on being admitted into the Christian covenant, become subjects of that kingdom. By nature we are the subjects of Satan's kingdom, who is the ruler of the darkness of this world. But God, in admitting us into the Christian covenant, delivers us from the power of darkness, and translates us into the kingdom of His dear Son<sup>7</sup>. God accepts and acknowledges us as His own subjects and servants, seeing that we are the subjects and servants of Christ.

2. And not only so: He brings us into a still closer and more endearing relationship. As Christ is the Son of God, so we, on being admitted into the Christian covenant, and being made members of Christ, are made sons of God in Him.

3. Another blessing bestowed upon us on our admission into the Christian covenant, is the forgiveness of our sins. Every man, when he is born into the world, is born a child of wrath. The guilt of our first father, Adam, who was himself the covenant head of

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. i. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Luke xxii. 29. Such would seem to be the force of the word in the original, "I give to you by covenant a kingdom, even as my Father hath given to me by covenant a kingdom."

<sup>7</sup> Col. i. 13.

his whole race, cleaves to all his descendants. When he fell, and lost God's favour, and forfeited Paradise, we all fell in him. And unless God, of His great mercy, had provided a way of escape, we must all have perished, even those who have died as infants, before they have lived long enough to commit sin of their own act and deed. But this is not all. From Adam we derive a sinful nature, which inclines us to choose evil and refuse good, from the moment we are capable of choice. And the effect of this sinful nature has been to add a long, and ever lengthening, list of actual transgressions to that original guilt which we inherited at our birth.

Now of these sins, both our birth sin and our actual sins, we have free and full forgiveness in Christ. "God made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin;" that is, He dealt with Christ, Who was sinless Himself, as though He had been a sinner—yea, as though He had been sin, as though all the sin of the whole world had been concentrated in Him; "He laid on Him the iniquity of us all<sup>8</sup>:" and this, that He might deal with us as though we were righteous, yea, righteousness,— "the righteousness of God," so perfectly righteous that no spot or stain of sin could be found in us<sup>9</sup>.

And this forgiveness, while it looks backward to all the sins preceding our admission into the Gospel covenant, looks forward to succeeding sins also, in such wise, that they also will be forgiven through Christ, provided that we return to God in good earnest, sincerely renewing that covenant, and devoting ourselves afresh to God's service.

4. One other blessing bestowed upon us on our admission into the Christian covenant, is the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who thereupon takes up His abode within us, to discharge towards us the various offices which He fulfils towards the people of Christ. These are, to instruct us and guide us into truth; to comfort

<sup>8</sup> Isa. liii. 6.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.

us under afflictions ; to assure us of our adoption into God's family ; to be a pledge to us of our final admission into heaven ; and especially—what, indeed, lies at the foundation of the rest—to sanctify us, and make us meet for the everlasting inheritance to which God through Christ has called us.

And herein consists the help towards the performance of the obligations of the Christian covenant, to which I referred at the close of the last chapter. Of ourselves, we cannot perform those obligations. But God, over and above the other blessings which He promises us, engages to give us grace to enable us to perform them.

We have this blessing, together with the one last-mentioned, the forgiveness of sin, very plainly and distinctly set forth as special blessings, promised under the new covenant, in a passage in Jeremiah, where God, by His prophet, describes that covenant as yet future : “ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord : but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel : After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more<sup>1</sup>.”

And now we may understand what is the nature of that change which takes place in a man, who truly

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxi. 31—34.



repents of his sins, and believes with all his heart in the Lord Jesus, on his being baptized, and, through Baptism, admitted into the Christian Covenant; a change so great that Scripture uses the strongest possible terms in speaking of it, calling it a "Regeneration" or "New Birth<sup>2</sup>," as though a man were born a second time, and describing it as "a burial with Christ" followed by "a resurrection with Him<sup>3</sup>."

And can it be a small thing for a man to be taken out of a state of nature and placed in a state of grace; to have Christ given him as his covenant Head and Representative instead of Adam; to be translated out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God; to be made a child of God instead of a child of wrath; to have all his sins blotted out and no more remembered against him, instead of lying under an overwhelming load of guilt, both original and actual; and lastly, to be made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and endowed with grace whereby to serve God, and grow in holiness and in conformity to Christ's image, instead of being left in the ignorance, weakness, and helplessness of unassisted nature, the slave of Satan and of his own lusts and passions? Surely these imply the greatest possible change of which we are capable.

There are two points, however, in regard to this change, respecting which it is very important to have a right understanding, especially as there exists much misapprehension about them.

1. The first is, that the change which has been spoken of is not the same in extent in all its particulars. In some respects it is a progressive change: it is begun in Baptism, rightly received, but not completed then. In other respects it is complete at once; though even so it needs to be maintained and kept up.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 3. Titus iii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Col. ii. 12. Rom. vi. 4, 5, and compare Ephes. ii. 1—10. It is true Baptism is not specified in this last mentioned passage; yet Col. ii. 12, which is entirely parallel to it, shows that Baptism must be understood. The like remark would apply to many other places in which the change which takes place on a man's being grafted into Christ is spoken of.

The work of sanctification, for instance, is a progressive work. In Baptism, the Holy Spirit is given for the carrying on of that work. But the Holy Spirit's presence must be cherished, and His aid sought from time to time, and the grace which He bestows stirred up, by diligence in the use of the various means of grace, joined to habitual watchfulness. Where this is done faithfully, the work will infallibly go forward; where it is neglected, the work will as infallibly go backward. Our privilege, as baptized persons, or persons admitted into covenant with God, is that we have the promise of the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, and to conform us to our Saviour's image. But yet the Holy Spirit will not stand us in stead for that end, unless we avail ourselves of His grace: and it is because they neglect to do so, that so many baptized persons, especially amongst those who have been baptized in infancy, are, to all practical purposes, as devoid of grace, as unsanctified in their hearts and lives, as if they had never been brought nigh to God, and admitted into His covenant.

But, though sanctification is progressive, forgiveness is not. We cannot be more or less forgiven, as we may be more or less holy. We must either be free from condemnation or under condemnation. Forgiveness, therefore, for the time being, is complete. In Baptism we receive, on the aforesaid conditions, full and entire forgiveness of all previous sin, both original sin and actual sin. And thenceforward, if we fall into sin, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins<sup>4</sup>," in such wise that on our truly returning to God through Him, according to the original terms of the Christian covenant, we are again forgiven, fully and entirely forgiven, for His sake.

2. The other point to be borne in mind is, that although the change, in regard to sanctification, begins

<sup>4</sup> 1 John ii. 1, 2.

in Baptism, in one sense; in another sense, speaking of persons baptized when grown up, it begins before Baptism. The repentance, and faith, and desire to become God's servants, and to be admitted into the Christian covenant, which lead men to desire Baptism, are the seeds of that holiness of heart and life which ensue after Baptism. And the former, as well as the latter, are the work of God's Holy Spirit. The difference lies mainly in this, that matters were upon a wholly different footing before Baptism from what they are after Baptism. Before Baptism, the Holy Spirit was given of God's mere mercy, irrespectively of any covenant; after Baptism it is given, still, indeed, of God's mere mercy, but yet in fulfilment of the covenant of which Baptism is the sign and seal.

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## PART II.

### PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE BLESSINGS TO BE RECEIVED IN BAPTISM.

I HAVE now put together the instructions which were given as to the doctrine of Baptism,—its necessity, its nature, and object, the obligations which it lays upon us, and the privileges to which it admits us. The clergyman, however, whose method of dealing with candidates for that Sacrament I am relating, was not satisfied with merely having their understandings informed upon the subject: he aimed unceasingly, beyond and through this, at influencing their hearts and affections. It was his earnest desire, and prayer, and endeavour, that, when they came to be baptized, they should come with a high estimation of the blessings conveyed in the covenant, and with an earnest longing after them, and at the same time with a cordial assent to the terms of the covenant, and an unfeigned purpose and intention of complying with them and abiding by them thenceforward for ever, without which, he continually reminded them, they could not hope for the blessings.

For this end, it was his custom not only to interweave practical exhortations with his instructions on the doctrine of Baptism, as opportunity was given, but also to revert to the subject again of set purpose, that he might press home upon the consciences of the

candidates the weighty considerations which belong to it.

I am very anxious, he would say to them, that you should have a deep and lively sense of the blessings of the Christian covenant, of which you hope in Baptism to be made partakers.

Consider the condition in which we all are by nature, and in which you still are. The Apostle gives a lively but sad description of it in his Epistle to the Ephesians<sup>1</sup>: "You hath he quickened," he says, "who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." And a little further on he continues, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Can any thing be more deplorable than the condition here described? That condition is the condition of us all naturally. It is yours at this day, except in so far as you have been stirred up by God's good Spirit to seek deliverance from it, and in so far as the blessings of the Gospel covenant have in any measure, by anticipation, been conferred upon you:—dead in trespasses and sins, the subjects and slaves of Satan, without interest in God's promises, without hope of a better life after this, nay, even without God, to whom you can look as your God.

But now see the blessings which await you on your

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. ii.



being admitted into that covenant of which Baptism is the sign and seal. Let the Apostle himself describe them, as he does in the same passage in which he so strikingly sets forth the misery of your present condition: "God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Observe, it is of God's mercy—His free and undeserved, but rich and abundant, mercy—that you are about to be brought into covenant with God, and made partakers of the blessings of the covenant. He it is who proposes the terms of the covenant, and disposes you to accept them, and provides a Mediator, in and through Whom you may engage securely. Whatsoever motions towards God you have already, these, even from their earliest stage, are from Him. And to Him you must look to perfect and complete them, till they issue in the full enjoyment of His presence in heaven.

"God hath quickened us together with Christ," the Apostle says. On this foundation rest whatsoever other blessings we receive, through our admission into the covenant. For what blessings can we be capable of while we continue in a state of death? "He hath quickened us together with Christ;" hath given us life by joining us to Christ, the fountain and source of life; and "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." For if Christ, Who is our Head and Representative, be risen, then we are already risen in Him; if He be seated at God's right hand in heaven, so are we also in Him. His resurrection and ascension are earnest and pledges of our own. These are the privileges of Christians; these will be your privileges, when, by entering into the Christian covenant, you become Christians. And, as the Apostle continues

towards the close of the same passage, you will no longer be, what you have been hitherto, "strangers and foreigners," having no part nor lot among God's people, but "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

Such then are the benefits which you are to look forward to, as they are summarily described by the Apostle. It may be well, however, to take a somewhat more detailed and systematic view of them, by referring back to the account given of them in the preceding chapter.

In receiving Baptism, and thereby setting your sign and seal to the Christian covenant, you will be grafted as living members into Christ's mystical body; you will be made members of Christ, and Christ will become your Head and Representative, and that in such wise, that whatsoever He has done, or suffered, or obtained for His people, you will become interested in, as done, suffered, and obtained for you.

Hitherto you have been the subjects and slaves of Satan; but now you will be delivered out of Satan's kingdom, and translated into the kingdom of Christ.

Men do not consider, for the most part, the hand which Satan and his agents have in the evil that is abroad in the world. By great numbers the very idea of such agency is treated with scorn, as though it were an idle tale invented to frighten simple people. But nothing is more plain in Scripture, than that every unregenerate person is under the dominion and sway of Satan, and is ruled by him either directly, or through the instrumentality of his evil angels. And of those who have been born again, if any grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and go back to the ways of sin, they so far open a door for the return of the evil one. And if they allow him once more to gain a footing within their hearts, our Lord's awful description of his re-entrance may

be applied to them: he comes back to the house from whence he had been driven out, and finds it "empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first<sup>2</sup>." What numbers are there in every Christian country in this condition!

But to return. On being admitted into the Christian covenant, you will from that moment be adopted into God's family. You will become children of God, and "if children," as the Apostle reasons, "then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ<sup>3</sup>." God will be your Father, and He will own and acknowledge you as His children. Christ will be your elder Brother, and all the saints your brethren in Christ. And whatsoever blessings are the portion of children, these will, in their season, be yours.

You will receive forgiveness of all your past sins. They will not be remembered against you any more. The burden with which you were heavy laden, will be removed; so that you may henceforth "run the way of God's commandments," seeing that He hath "set your heart at liberty<sup>4</sup>." Nor is it merely as regards past sins that you may look to receive forgiveness. Henceforth you are the sons of an Almighty and most merciful Father; and though you may too often err and go astray from His ways like lost sheep, He will be ever ready to forgive you, as often as you sincerely repent and return to Him. Only remember, however, that this is said, not to encourage you to sin, but that you may not be cast down, as though your case were hopeless, if you should be so unhappy as to fall into sin. According to St. John's words, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 43—45.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. cxix. 32.

the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins<sup>5</sup>.”

Further, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to fulfil in you the various offices which He discharges towards Christ's people. “Because you are sons, God will send forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father<sup>6</sup>.” This blessed Spirit will instruct you where you are ignorant; cheer and comfort you when you are in distress; in prayer He will help your infirmities, and enable you to pray aright; and in your conflicts with the evil one without, and the evil tendencies of your own hearts within, He will be an ever present helper and defender.

For do not suppose, that when once you have been admitted into the Christian covenant, your work is done, and that nothing remains for you but to wait patiently till God calls you hence, and removes you from the Church below to the Church above. On the contrary, you will still be exposed to the assaults of Satan; and from that day forward you must expect that he will never rest, till you have crossed the stream of death, and are for ever beyond his reach. Make up your minds therefore for conflict, unceasing conflict. You will have many a battle to fight, and often you will be humbled to the very dust to find that so great an amount of evil still clings to you. But press forward. They that be with you are more and mightier than those that be against you. If only you will be true to that Holy Spirit Who has vouchsafed to abide within you, and will stir up the blessed gift which has been given you, and will yield yourselves to be ruled and directed by Him at His will, all shall be well in the end. “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise up against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn<sup>7</sup>.” Sin will have less and less power over you: you will become more

<sup>5</sup> 1 John ii. 1, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Gal. iv. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Isa. liv. 17.

and more conformed to Christ's image. And thus you will go from strength to strength, till you appear before God in Zion.

These are the blessings of which, by virtue of the covenant into which you are about to be admitted, you will be made partakers in this life: and great and inestimable as they are, they are but earnest and foretastes of infinitely greater blessings to be enjoyed hereafter, when God will give you the blessing of eternal life, and make you partakers of His everlasting kingdom.

It is much, for instance, to have been delivered out of the kingdom of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. But yet, in the present dispensation, Satan is still permitted to harass and molest the subjects of Christ's kingdom. He is not yet wholly put under Christ's feet. He is still suffered, for wise purposes, one while to sow tares among Christ's wheat, another to tempt and molest Christ's servants. But it will not be so always. A day is coming when he shall be driven forth to his own place, and bound there for ever. In that blessed kingdom, into which Christ's kingdom now established on earth shall merge, he shall never set foot. There will be no tempter there, nor any evil, either within or around, to furnish matter or occasion for temptation.

Here too, though, on admission into the Christian covenant, we receive forgiveness of all our past sins, yet we know that, while we continue on earth, we shall never reach so high a measure, but that each day, as it comes, will witness fresh sins, and therefore fresh need of forgiveness. But in heaven it will be otherwise. As all the sins of the whole life will have been blotted out and done away for ever, so there will be no possibility of contracting fresh guilt.

Here too the conformity which we acquire to Christ's image is but partial and imperfect. Though



we are born again, and the Holy Spirit is given us to mortify and kill the old nature, and to raise us up to newness of life, and though, if we are true to ourselves and to God, and yield ourselves obediently to the Holy Spirit's influence, the old nature is being mortified and killed more and more, day by day, and we are being raised more and more to newness of life, still we come far short, even at the best, of what we would attain. But in heaven the change will be complete. Not one vestige of evil will remain in us. We shall be perfectly conformed to our Lord's image. "We shall be like Him; for we shall see him as He is <sup>8</sup>."

Here, too, though we are admitted to hold most blessed communion with God in His ordinances, spreading our wants before Him, praising and magnifying His great Name, hearkening to His holy Word, feasting at His holy Table; yet all this is dull and imperfect compared with the full and complete fruition which we shall possess in heaven. Here, "we see through a glass darkly," but there, "face to face." Here, "we know in part," but there, "shall we know even as also we are known <sup>9</sup>."

One further blessing there will be in the heavenly state, which is like a crown set upon the head of all its other blessings: once attained it cannot be lost; it is secure for ever. It is true that, even here on earth, they who are once brought within Christ's covenant, and have this token that they are Christ's chosen people, are secure too, if only they "continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel <sup>1</sup>." But this very "if," in a matter of such unspeakable moment, is cause for fear and trembling in working out our salvation. But in heaven there will be no "ifs;" we shall be safe beyond all reach of danger, secure beyond all possibility of falling.

<sup>8</sup> 1 John iii. 2.<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 12.<sup>1</sup> Col. i. 23.

These, then, and such as these, are the blessings to which you will become entitled on your admission by Baptism into the Christian covenant. Some of them you will receive at the time of your admission; others as you become capable of them, or as the season for their being given arrives. And are they not worthy of your most intense desires? What reward can you give unto the Lord for such abounding goodness, such riches of Divine mercy? All the reward He asks, is that you should accept the cup of salvation thus offered to you, and hold it fast for ever. And all the return you can make, which yet you must look to Him to enable you to make, is to walk worthy of your high calling, and to bring forth more and more abundantly those good works, unto which we are created in Christ Jesus, and which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them<sup>3</sup>.

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## CHAPTER II.

### SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE PROMISES TO BE MADE IN BAPTISM.

“BE not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God<sup>4</sup>,” is the wise Preacher’s advice concerning vows. And if it be sound advice in regard to ordinary vows, how much more so in regard to vows of such unspeakable importance as those which are made in Baptism! It behoves you, therefore, to consider well beforehand the obligations by which, whether you mean so or not, you will bind yourselves; and together with these your own temper and disposition, whether you are really prepared to enter into them and undertake them.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. ii. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Eccles. v. 2

For remember, and this cannot be pressed home upon you too seriously, great as are the benefits conveyed in Baptism, they are conveyed to those only who receive it in sincerity, unfeignedly purposing, by God's grace, to stand by their engagements, even as they feel assured that Christ will stand by His promises. If a man comes to be baptized, and yet in his heart still clings to the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and has no thought of walking in the way of God's commandments, his Baptism will profit him nothing. His body may be washed with water, but his soul will not be washed with Christ's blood. And yet, for all that, he will not remain precisely as though he had not been baptized. He will be as much bound by the vows and obligations of Baptism, as though he had made them with the fullest intention of keeping them. God will look thenceforth for his services; and he will be judged at the last day accordingly. And his punishment, if he continues unfaithful, will be proportionably greater than if he had never been brought into so near a relationship.

The obligations by which you will bind yourselves when you come to be baptized, I have already explained to you. What I wish to do now is to press them home upon you, and to assist you in searching and trying your hearts, as to whether you sincerely desire to abide by them. And this I cannot do better than by taking the very words in which you will make your vows in the baptismal service, and drawing matter for self-examination out of them.

When you stand at the font, ready to be baptized, the minister will first rehearse to you generally the engagements of the covenant into which you are about to enter; both the promises by which Christ will bind Himself on His part, and the engagements by which you will bind yourselves on yours. This done, he will proceed to demand of you what your mind and intention is with regard to each of the last-mentioned engagements.

### I. First Baptismal Promise.

“Dost thou,” will be his first question,—“Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by, them?” And to this you will answer, “I renounce them all.”

Now, what I wish earnestly to press home upon you is, that you would consider most seriously with yourselves, Do you renounce them all? Do your hearts go along with your tongues when you say that you do?

1. Do you renounce the devil? To renounce means to forsake, not to follow nor be led by, to give up all connexion with. Do you then in sincerity and truth withdraw yourselves from the service of that wicked master, to whom hitherto you have been in subjection.

Numbers do not believe even that they have such a master, or that there is such a being. And no doubt one principal means by which he retains his power, is the keeping them from believing it. His art is to rule in secret, working upon men’s minds, inflaming their lusts, kindling their passions, chaining down their affections to earthly and sensual objects, whichever suits his purpose. No mortal eye sees his agency. The effects of it indeed are sadly enough apparent; but the agency itself is so secret that it would never have been known, nor possibly even suspected, if Scripture had not lifted the veil, and shown us the hand that is at work.

Do you then, I say, renounce this master? Is it your earnest desire and purpose to yield yourselves to him no longer? Are you resolved that henceforth Christ, and God in Christ, shall be your Master; and are you prepared to yield yourselves to Him, to be guided and governed by His good Spirit at His will?

Again, Do you renounce the works of the devil,—

all his works? Need I say what these are? Sin of every description.

Are you prepared then to forsake and give up every evil practice to which hitherto you have been addicted, and to struggle against every evil habit by which hitherto you have been enslaved, whatever you know to be contrary to God's will, or may hereafter discover to be so? You cannot serve two masters. You cannot be the devil's servants in some respects, and God's servants in others. You must either be wholly on the Lord's side or not at all. It is very important that you should deal honestly and sincerely by yourselves in this matter, for want of honesty and sincerity will be fatal. Look back therefore over your past lives, and consider what sins you have been addicted to. It may be you have been kept from grosser vices, such as would have disgraced you in the eyes of those for whose good opinion you care; but perhaps you have been the slaves of sloth, or pride, or anger, or covetousness, or secret impurity, or some other of the many forms of evil, by means of which Satan has held you in subjection, and the effects of which have been more or less apparent in your lives and conversation. Whatever it be, are you resolved to yield to it no longer? And is it your earnest prayer to God, and will it continue to be so, that you may be delivered from it entirely?

2. The next thing you pledge yourselves to renounce, is "the vain pomp and glory of the world, with the covetous desires of the same."

When the expression, "the vain pomp and glory of the world," was first used, (and it formed a part of the baptismal service in very early times), it referred especially to the theatres, and public shows, which were wont to be celebrated in the heathen cities. And as these were places of great temptation, and scenes of all kinds of wickedness, the very "seats of Satan<sup>5</sup>," those

<sup>5</sup> Rev. ii. 13.



who were to be baptized were required to make a promise in these or similar words, that they would not frequent them, nor be present at them<sup>6</sup>. It is easy to see how far the same rule still holds. Though there are no heathen shows to which we may have access, still there are places or companies, into which no one who loves his Saviour, or values his soul, or regards his baptismal vows, will endure to go. Shall I tell you what those places, or those companies are? Those in which you will hear sin made a mock of, as though it were a light matter, or something even to be gloried in; where God's Name is taken in vain; where oaths, and curses, and profane jests, and filthy language, are used without scruple; where God's people and God's service are ridiculed and made sport with. There is a story told by an old writer, of a woman, who, though a Christian, had ventured into one of these scenes of wickedness, and came back, as we read of many in the New Testament, possessed by an unclean spirit; and when, as was still usual, the exorcist attempted to cast out the devil, and asked the evil spirit, "How he dared to enter into a Christian?" his answer was, "Why should not I, when I found her on my own ground?" The story may be true or not, in all its circumstances; but this is certain, that no Christian can come unharmed out of such company, if he has gone into it, or prolonged his stay in it, unnecessarily.

This which has been mentioned, however, is only a part of what is signified by renouncing the world, with its vain pomp and glory, and its covetous desires. To speak summarily: as Christians, we are to give up conformity to the world in all things. We are not to be guided by the world's standard, nor led away by the world's practice; nor to set our affections on the things which the world admires and lusts after. God's Word is to be our rule; Jesus Christ is to be our example; holiness here, heaven hereafter, are to be the

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian. de Spectaculis, p. 83. Bingham's Antiq. vol. iii. p. 218, &c.

grand objects of our desires. If we follow the world, we shall think it a noble thing to be proud, and to show a high spirit; if we follow the Word of God, and the example of Christ, we shall count pride a sin; and a high spirit, in the world's sense of that term, a disgrace. If we follow the world, we shall admire those most, and be most anxious for their acquaintance, who have some worldly advantage or other to recommend them; if we follow the Word of God, and the example of Christ, we shall value men in proportion to their holiness. We shall account those only truly great and truly honourable, whose lives and conversation bear testimony that they are among those whom the Lord delighteth to honour. If we follow the world, we shall think money, and houses, and lands, and other worldly goods, the chief things worth living for, and be ready to "spend and be spent," in the acquisition of them; if we follow the Word of God and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall account those only the true riches, which we can take with us to another world, and enjoy throughout eternity.

3. There is yet one other pledge by which you will bind yourselves: you will promise to renounce "the carnal desires of the flesh;" that is, all such desires as are prompted by the flesh, and lead to the works of the flesh. And "the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strifes, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which" (continues the Apostle, whose words these are) "I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God<sup>7</sup>."

The truth is, as has been already said, our nature

<sup>7</sup> Gal. v. 19—21.

has contracted an evil bias. It was not what it now is, when man was first formed. God created man in His own image. But Adam lost God's image; and his children, and his children's children, are born like him. They have the same noble faculties which he had when he first came from his Maker's hands, but all miserably perverted and turned aside. It is one great object for which our Lord came down to earth, to restore in us the image which Adam lost; to renew us, after the likeness of Him who created us, in righteousness and true holiness<sup>8</sup>. And here lies the difficulty of a religious life. It is like turning the course of a stream, or making a crooked tree grow straight. Nay, Scripture uses a stronger image still; it speaks of mortifying—putting to death, our affections which are upon the earth, of crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts<sup>9</sup>. But we have no choice. If we will be Christ's servants, we must go on waging a continual war, maintaining a perpetual struggle, against the evil that is within us; cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God<sup>1</sup>. It is most true, indeed, we can do nothing in our own strength. But what may we not do in the strength of Christ? And Christ's strength shall be ours, if we will but ask it. Christ came to save us not only from the guilt of sin, but from its power also. And, indeed, He will not do one without the other.

I ask, then, once more, Are you in this respect also prepared to make the promises which will be required of you? Do you renounce the sinful desires of the flesh, so that henceforth you will not follow nor be led by them? And this, not in your own strength, but in the strength of Christ, now about to become yours? Are you resolved to maintain a constant struggle

<sup>8</sup> See Ephes. iv. 23, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Gal. v. 24. Col. iii. 5.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 1.

against the corrupt tendencies of your nature, seeking to mortify pride, sloth, vain-glory, lust, anger, envy, covetousness,—whatsoever there is in you that is contrary to God's image.

## II. Second Baptismal Promise.

The second and third questions which will be put to you, when you come to be baptized, relate to your belief. "Dost thou believe," you will be asked, "in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? and in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, our Lord?" and so on through the several articles of the Apostles' Creed. To all which you will be expected to answer, "All this I stedfastly believe." And then will follow a further question, "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith," that is, will you, by receiving Baptism, solemnly profess this faith, and acknowledge it openly and before the world? To which you will be required to answer, "That is my desire."

It is very obvious that faith lies at the foundation of religion. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him<sup>2</sup>." Without such belief, a man would not even have the inclination to come to God. Further, seeing that no man can come to God but by His Son, nor by His Son but in the way which His Son has revealed, he that cometh to God must believe in His Son, and believe also in the revelation which His Son has made. Faith in Christ, therefore, is, by the very reason of the case, not less necessary than faith in God. Further still, seeing that a man cannot rightly believe in Christ, nor come unto God by Him, nor receive the revelation which He hath given, except the Holy Spirit be his teacher, faith in the Holy Spirit is, by the same reason of the case, equally necessary with faith in the Father and in the Son.

The Creed is a collection of the chief points or arti-

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xi. 6.

cles which relate to these three Divine Persons, as well as of some others, the belief of which is necessarily connected with a right belief of the former.

We profess our faith, first, in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Do you then believe in God, and believe in Him in such wise as those words imply?

When you consider the earth in which we live, and think of the marvellous way in which it is replenished with inhabitants, and stored with all manner of productions fitted for their use and comfort; when you reflect upon the good providence which watches over it, so that seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, never cease; when you consider the heavens, and behold the sun walking in brightness, and the moon and the stars following in his train, and all keeping their appointed courses, as they have done generation after generation, since they were first created,—are not your thoughts led from them to their great Maker? Yet these are but a part of His works. They are such as come within the range of our senses. But there are others, of which our senses have no cognizance, which yet are more marvellous still. Scripture informs us that there are countless multitudes of spiritual beings, of prodigious strength, some of them continually employed around us and in our behalf; and these too owe the life they possess, and all that makes it happy, to the same Almighty Creator.

Do you believe in this great God?

But yet, it will be small comfort to believe in Him, if a man knows himself to be a sinner, as, in truth, he is, and, as a sinner, exposed to His just displeasure, unless at the same time he understand how that just displeasure may be taken away, and sin forgiven.

Do you then believe further in “Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,” Who, though He was God of God, yet came into the world, was made man, being



conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, and, as man, lived, died, was buried, descended into hell, (that is, His Spirit passed into the invisible world, and there sojourned among the spirits of the dead), rose again, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, and all for this end;—that He might reconcile us to God, and procure us pardon of our sins, and admission into His glorious kingdom, in that day when He shall come to judge all men, both those whom He shall find alive at His coming, and those who shall have died before? Do you, I say, believe in this gracious Saviour? And do you so believe in Him, that you are putting your whole trust in Him, and are resting all your hopes of heaven and happiness upon His mediation, acknowledging your own utter helplessness and inability to save yourselves?

But yet further: You not only need the good offices of this Divine Saviour to obtain for you pardon and forgiveness, you need grace also, to enable you to resist the devil, and to overcome the evil that you are prone to, and to walk worthy of the high calling with which you have been called. To supply this grace is the special office of the Holy Ghost. Do you, then, believe in the Holy Ghost? do you believe Him to be—for such He is—a divine Person, a Spirit, not a created spirit, as the holy angels are, but uncreated; one God with the Father and the Son—a separate and distinct Person indeed, yet but one God?

And do you, in such wise, believe in this Divine Being, that you look to Him, and depend upon Him for grace wherewith to serve God, as truly and as simply as you look to Christ, and depend upon Christ for pardon, that you may be reconciled to God? Thus much, at least, you must mean, if you say with understanding, and with feelings corresponding, that you believe in the Holy Ghost.

There still remain some further points, of chief importance to be believed.

Although the eternal Son of God became man, and died and rose again, that He might deliver us from condemnation; and although, after His ascension into heaven, He sent down the Holy Spirit to sanctify His people, and prepare them for the happy abode which He designs for them, yet these benefits are not bestowed on men indiscriminately, but on those only who are members of a society, called the Church. Of this society Christ is the Head, and all who are admitted into it are the members; and the Holy Spirit, proceeding from Christ, and shed abroad in the heart of each individual, is the bond of union which knits them all severally to Christ, their Head, and, in Christ, first to God, and then to each other. Into this Church you will be admitted on your Baptism. For just as the societies which men have established among themselves have, for the most part, some form of admittance, so this society likewise:—Baptism is the form of admittance; a form appointed by Christ Himself for that end; and therefore so necessary to be observed, that no one can be considered a member of the society, who has not been admitted by means of it.

This Church is a holy Church, because it is separated from the world; because it has the Holy Spirit abiding within it; and because, however there may be, for the present, a mixture of evil with good—tares sown among the wheat, to use our Lord's image,—its members, in so far as they are yielding themselves to the Holy Spirit's guidance, are really holy. Further: the Church, besides being holy, is Catholic, that is, universal, because, unlike the Jewish body, which consisted of but one nation, its members are gathered, or are yet to be gathered, out of the whole world. Nor is it restricted merely to those now living; it includes within its fold all who have died in the Lord. For these, though we call them dead, still live to God. Their bodies rest, each in the

place where by God's providence it has been laid; some in the bosom of the earth, beneath the shadow of the house of prayer in which they worshipped while they lived; others, it may be, in the depths of the ocean; but all safe in God's keeping, waiting for the coming of that great day, when they shall be again raised, and their spirits, now with Christ, reunited to them, to be thenceforward for ever with the Lord.

Do you, then, believe that there is a Church such as I have described? Do you believe that the saints, who are the holy members of which it is composed, both those now living on earth, and those who are departed to be with Christ, have communion and fellowship with each other in it, through Christ, being children of the same Father, brothers of the same family, having one common interest, one common faith, one common hope? Do you believe that in this Church there is forgiveness of sins for all who truly repent and seek forgiveness of God, through Christ? Do you believe that these bodies of ours, however they may be disposed of when we die, shall be raised at the last day; and, our spirits being reunited to them, shall either live for ever in the presence of God, and in the enjoyment of His favour, if we have died in the Lord, or, if otherwise, shall be tormented through all eternity, with Satan and his angels?

### III. Third Baptismal Promise.

The fourth and last question which you will be asked is, "Wilt thou obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?" To which you will be required to answer, "I will endeavour so to do, God being my helper."

God's holy will and commandments are set forth in the Scriptures. And if you are sincere in making the promise that by God's help you will endeavour to keep them, you will be diligent in reading the Scrip-

tures, as well as in hearing the Word of God read and preached, that you may be better and better acquainted with them, and that you may be reminded of them from time to time, lest in any instance you should let them slip. And we all need to be reminded, as well as to be instructed for the first time.

God's will and commandments are declared in almost every page of Scripture. But we have them briefly set forth in that summary of them which God delivered to the children of Israel, when He solemnly entered into covenant with them at Mount Sinai. And, lest we should narrow their meaning, or pervert them, as the Jews did, we have some of them explained, and a principle of explanation given by which to explain the rest, in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount.

### *First Table.*

1st Commandment. If a master engages a servant, it will be implied, if it is not expressed, in the agreement, as the very foundation on which the engagement rests, that that servant must acknowledge no other master. God makes the same requirement, as the basis of His engagement with us. "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." And by this He means, not only that we shall not acknowledge any other being, real or imaginary, as our God, and offer worship to him; but further, that we shall allow no one whatever, and no thing whatever, to interfere with the love, and duty, and service, we owe to Him. He is to have the highest place in our hearts and affections. His will is to be our will. And we are to render to Him all the honour and observance, both of our souls and bodies, of which we are capable.

2nd Commandment. As regards our religious worship, we must take heed that it be none other than God Himself prescribes, or than is agreeable to His

character. The error, in this respect, to which men were most prone, at the time when the Law was given, was idolatry,—the paying divine honour to images, whether meant to represent God, or any of His creatures. And this error, therefore, was forbidden specifically. But there is another error more prevalent among us at the present day, which is also forbidden by this commandment. However a man may scorn to fall down before an image of wood or stone, yet if he sets upon any earthly thing that supreme affection which is due to God alone, he is an idolater, and the thing which he so regards is to him an idol. The worldling who worships mammon, the sceptic who deifies his reason, the sensualist whose god is his belly, all are alike idolaters. “Covetousness,” as the Apostle tells us, “is idolatry<sup>3</sup>.” In short, any undue love or veneration for the things of this world is a violation of the second commandment.

3rd Commandment. One way in which men acknowledge God is the swearing by His Name; that is, in other words, the calling upon Him, as seeing all things, and knowing all things, to bear witness to what they say. The third commandment forbids all manner of irreverence towards Him in this respect; whether it be by taking a false oath, or, though the matter of the oath be true, yet by making use of an oath on a light and insufficient occasion, or by making a vow which there is no intention to fulfil, or by failing to fulfil a vow already made, or by swearing by any other name than God’s, as by heaven, or by one’s soul, or the like. Common cursing and swearing likewise come within the range of this commandment; so does the light and irreverent use of God’s sacred Name in our ordinary conversation, as in such expressions as “Lord have mercy upon us!”

<sup>3</sup> Col. ii. 5.



“God help us!” “Good God!” and the like. Every insincere and hypocritical prayer is also a breach of this commandment; for if we call upon God with our lips while our hearts are far from Him, what is this but to take His Name in vain?

4th Commandment. Although God has a just claim upon all our time, yet He has been pleased to require us to set apart one day in every seven for His special service, and in acknowledgment of His relation to us, both as our Creator and as our Redeemer<sup>4</sup>. In the fourth commandment, therefore, we are bidden to keep holy the Sabbath-day; by which is meant, that we are to make a difference between it and other days, resting from our ordinary work, assembling ourselves together in God’s house for public worship, and using all the means in our power in private, for deepening and strengthening religious impressions upon our souls. Sunday is to be spent as a day dedicated to God, as a day of holy joy and gladness; as a day of prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving; as a day of special preparation for that eternal Sabbath of which it is an earnest and foretaste. Our religious state will be very materially influenced by the manner in which we observe this commandment. If we remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day, we shall grow in grace, and make increase in holiness; if we forget or neglect to keep it holy, the life of God within us will go on wasting and decaying, till at length it becomes extinct altogether.

<sup>4</sup> In Exod. xx, when the Law was first given, the observance of the Sabbath was required in memory of God’s resting from the work of creation; in Deut. v, when the Law was repeated, shortly before the Israelites entered Canaan, it was required in memory of the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. And that deliverance was a figure of the deliverance which Christ was afterwards to effect for His people from the bondage of sin and Satan. The former reason concerned the whole race of mankind; the second concerned the Jews alone in its literal application, but, figuratively and spiritually, it concerns Christians also.

I have now gone over very briefly and cursorily the first four commandments, which together make up the first table, and set forth the duty which we owe to God. Is it your sincere and earnest purpose, by God's grace, to keep these commandments? Are you resolved that you will acknowledge none else as your Lord and your God, but God only; and that you will serve Him with all the powers both of your bodies and of your souls? Will you worship Him in the way which He prescribes, and in none other; and endeavour to entertain no other thoughts or apprehensions of Him than such as His Word affords grounds for? Will you avoid every approach to irreverence towards Him, whether in regard to oaths or any other matter? Will you remember to keep holy the Christian Sabbath-day, making a difference between it and other days, and striving to improve it, to the utmost of your power, in praising and magnifying His great Name, and in preparing yourselves for the rest which you hope to enjoy in heaven, and of which it is a type?

*Second Table.*

The commandments which follow relate to the duty which we owe our neighbour.

5th Commandment. Of all our neighbours those who are the nearest, and most closely related to us, are our parents. The fifth commandment therefore specifies them, and bids us honour them. But, in so doing, it is plain that in its principle it glances onward to all other relationships. In its full meaning it can signify nothing less than that we are to be true and faithful, whether as children towards parents, or as servants towards masters, or as subjects towards rulers, or as members of the Church towards the spiritual pastors set over them: in one word, whatever be the duties of the relationship in which we stand to those above us, those duties, as Christians, we are to render heartily and cheerfully, as to the Lord, and not to men.

And happy, indeed, would it be for society if this were done universally.

6th Commandment. The sixth commandment takes under its protection that possession, which is naturally the most valuable and most dear to every man,—life, “Thou shalt do no murder.” And it forbids not only direct *murder*, but whatsoever has a tendency to produce it; whether the indulgence of HATRED in our hearts; or the giving way to immoderate anger<sup>5</sup>; or the making use of reproachful names or words, such as serve to stir up and inflame men’s revengeful passions; and by the same reason also, it prohibits any attempt or intention to destroy or shorten our own lives. Suicide, for example, is self-murder, and comes within the range of the commandment.

7th Commandment. The seventh commandment watches over the sacredness of marriage. It forbids adultery; and, in so doing, forbids whatsoever else has a tendency to dissolve the marriage bond. It forbids whoredom, and all manner of uncleanness, not only in deed, but even in word, in look, and in thought. “Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery, (or fornication, as the case may be), with her already in his heart<sup>6</sup>,” our Lord tells us. As Christians, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit<sup>7</sup>. And it behoves us to use them as such, taking heed that we defile neither them, nor the souls which actuate them, by impurity of any description, lest, by so doing, we desecrate what God has sanctified, and provoke the heavenly Inhabitant Who has vouchsafed to take up His abode within us, to forsake His dwelling-place.

8th Commandment. The eighth commandment forbids all violations of the rights of property; not only robbing, stealing, and such like more obvious violations of those rights, but cheating, using false weights or measures, taking unfair advantage in a

<sup>5</sup> 1 John iii. 12, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. v. 28.

<sup>7</sup> See 1 Cor. vi. 19.

bargain, keeping back from others what is justly due to them, refusing or neglecting to pay our debts, evading rates or taxes, smuggling, oppression of the poor, as in other ways, so especially by defrauding them of their just and reasonable wages, wasting that which has been entrusted to us, or suffering it to take damage; akin to which is the unfaithfulness of servants who squander their employers' time, or do the work which they have undertaken, and for which they look to be paid, idly and negligently. These are some of the many ways in which the eighth commandment is broken. And it behoves us, if we would act as Christians, to avoid them, and all like ways.

Now, if your consciences bear witness against you that in former times you have been guilty in respect of any of these, then it is your plain duty to acknowledge your sin, and to make restitution and satisfaction to the utmost of your power. So Zaccheus did, when he became Christ's disciple: "If I have taken any thing from any man," he says, "by false accusation, I restore him fourfold<sup>8</sup>." Fourfold restitution, indeed, is not required. But certainly no one can be coming in a right spirit to receive Baptism, in the first instance, or the Lord's Supper, after he has been baptized, who is not doing, or at any rate is not ready to do, all that in him lies to make amends to those, if any such there be, whom he has wronged or defrauded.

9th Commandment. As the sixth commandment protects our neighbour's life, and the seventh his domestic happiness, and the eighth his property, so the ninth watches over his character and good name: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." And by false witness is meant not only false witness deliberately borne in a court of justice, but all manner of false speaking which has a tendency to injure our neighbour's character, or to lower him in the opinion of

<sup>8</sup> Luke xix. 8.

others. Lying also, and insincerity in all their shapes and forms, are breaches of this commandment.

But, though the letter of the commandment speaks only of bearing false witness, yet the spirit of it evidently reaches to every description of evil speaking. Even though what we say is true, yet we are not to say it, if it be to our neighbour's disadvantage, unless there be grave and sufficient cause to warrant it. Yet how few are there, who, for all their solemn pledge given in Baptism, keep a watch over their lips in these respects, and speak as those who remember, that for every idle word they speak they must one day give account before God<sup>9</sup>.

10th Commandment. The tenth commandment might seem to have been designed, over and above its direct object, to show the Jews from the first, what our Lord has shown us more explicitly, that their law, in each of its commandments, reached further than merely to the outward conduct. It forbids us to desire that which is our neighbour's. The seventh commandment had said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" and the eighth, "Thou shalt not steal;" but this strikes at the root of both adultery and stealing. It says, "Thou shalt not covet." It requires us, therefore, to regulate our most secret desires as well as our actions by God's law; to be content with what we have; or, if we allow ourselves in any instance to wish for what we have not, to wish for it no otherwise than as we may obtain it without injury to our neighbour, and without offence to God.

These, then, are the commandments of the second table. They relate to the duties which we owe to our fellow men. Is it your sincere purpose and intention, by God's grace, to frame your lives according to them? Will you strive to be true and faithful in the discharge of your duties, whether as a child, a servant, a subject, or a member of the Church. Will you

<sup>9</sup> Matt. xii. 36.



abstain—I do not say, merely from murder, but—from every thing that has a tendency to stir up angry passions, whether in others or in yourselves? Will you keep your bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity, as remembering that, once baptized, those bodies will be members of Christ's body, and temples of the Holy Ghost? Will you keep your hands from picking and stealing, and, in one word, avoid all manner of dishonesty, dealing as truly and justly by your neighbour's property as if it were your own? Will you keep your tongues from evil speaking, lying, and slandering, and be as tender of your neighbour's character and good name as you would wish him to be of yours? Will you, lastly, not only guard against outward evil, but set a watch against the very thoughts and desires which give rise to outward evil, being content with such things as you have, and striving to frame your inmost wishes in accordance not only with God's laws, but with His providence also?

It is too true you will not be able perfectly to keep these commandments, whether of the first or second table; but yet you are to aim at nothing short of perfection, to be content with nothing short of it, to allow yourselves in nothing short of it. They are the rule which God has given us to walk by, and by them we shall be judged at the last day. And though our acceptance with God is not procured by our obedience, but by the obedience and death of Christ, yet we can have no ground for hoping that we are really availing ourselves of Christ's obedience and death, except in so far as our hearts and lives bear us witness that we are sincerely desirous of keeping all God's commandments, and are earnestly striving to do so.

## CHAPTER III.

## PRAYER.

I HAVE now gone over the several promises which you will be required to make on entering into covenant with God. But I must remind you, (what indeed has been hinted at repeatedly in the course of what has been said,) that you cannot either make them in sincerity and truth in the first instance, or abide by them afterwards, unless God give you grace to do so. But, for your comfort, you must know that God is most ready and willing to give you grace. All that is necessary on your parts is, that you ask it of Him, and persevere in asking it, taking heed, at the same time, that you use what He gives, and as He gives it. For the Scripture rule is, not only "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened<sup>10</sup>;" but also, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath<sup>11</sup>."

If, therefore, you desire to fulfil your part of the baptismal covenant, if you desire to make the promises which will be required of you in sincerity and truth in the first instance, and to abide by those promises thenceforward, remember that you must be earnest and diligent in prayer to God for His grace, and withal careful to improve His grace when it is given, by striving to live as He would have you live.

If you will turn to the first rubric prefixed to the service which will be used when you are baptized, you will see that prayer is distinctly specified as a very important part of the preparation which is

<sup>10</sup> Matt. vii. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Matt. xiii. 12.

required for the right reception of that holy Sacrament. And that prayer in this case may be quickened to greater earnestness and seriousness, as well as that, being offered up from hearts bowed down and deeply humbled, it may, through the intercession of Christ, be more effectual, the rubric joins fasting with it.

Let your approaching Baptism, then, have a foremost place in your prayers every day. And on some days set apart, if possible, a larger portion of time than usual for special supplication in reference to it. And let your prayers on these last-mentioned occasions be accompanied by fasting. Sundays, though not days for fasting, are days for prayer, and should be especially devoted to prayer with this object in view. Remember, that while it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, yet ordinarily His blessing is vouchsafed only in answer to prayer, and in proportion to our earnestness and diligence in prayer.

And as your first entrance into the Christian life is thus ushered in with prayer, so remember that that life is to be carried on with prayer to the end. Sincere as I doubt not you will be in making the promises which you will make at your Baptism, you will, for all that, need God's grace in every stage of your course, to enable you to perform them. And God's grace is to be sought and obtained throughout by prayer. It is impossible to over-rate the importance of this great duty. Every thing, as far as regards your religious state, depends upon it. If you are diligent in the observance of it, you will go on from strength to strength, growing in grace, and waxing riper and riper for your heavenly inheritance; if you neglect it, or, becoming slothful and remiss, content yourselves with the mere form of prayer, without the spirit of it, you will decline, and go on declining, till you fall into a state of religious indifference, if not into some gross and degrading sin; and, unless God's

great mercy arouse you to retrace your steps, you will be forsaken by the Holy Spirit, Who, at your baptism, will have taken up His abode within you, and so forfeit heaven altogether,

I will not lengthen out what I have to say to you by dwelling at large upon the subject of prayer. Let me only remind you, that if you would indeed live in the exercise of this great duty, it is of the utmost importance that you should have set times for it, morning and night at least, and should guard those times with jealous watchfulness. That which has no set time fixed and kept for it, is always liable to be first neglected, and then laid aside altogether. And whatever time you give, be sure you strive to improve it to the utmost. The true measure of prayer is not the number of words repeated, but the amount of earnestness, humility, reverence, and other kindred graces, which actuate the words and put life into them. These, too, are God's gift, and are to be sought of God in prayer. So that, in fact, the first step in every prayer is to pray that we may be enabled to pray; to pray for the aid of the Holy Spirit, Whose office it is "to help our infirmities," and "to make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered<sup>1</sup>."

With regard to the subject matter of our prayers, that is, what we are to pray for, this must be determined by our wants. Yet as there are some great, urgent, and continually recurring wants, which press on us every day, these will every day require a place in our prayers. Such are, besides those which relate to the body and the present life, the pardon of sin, which involves the confession of those particular sins with which our consciences are burthened, and for which we desire forgiveness; and grace to overcome sin, which, in like manner, involves the mention of the particular temptations to which we are exposed, and of the particular graces which we need.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 26.

*The Lord's Prayer.*

Our blessed Lord has given us, in the prayer called "The Lord's Prayer," a form of words as a pattern for our prayers; and it is so wide and comprehensive in its meaning, that there is not a single want we can have, whether as regards the body or the soul, which may not be brought within the range of one or another of its petitions.

It was always the custom from the earliest times to instruct those preparing for Baptism in this prayer, as a part of their preparation for that Sacrament, the prayer being considered peculiarly a Christian's prayer, and unsuitable in the mouth of any but a Christian. My instructions, therefore, might justly be considered incomplete, if I did not endeavour to give you some further acquaintance with the Lord's Prayer.

*"Our Father, Which art in heaven."*

We begin the Lord's Prayer by calling upon God as "our Father Which is in heaven." This shows us in what spirit, and with what feelings, we are to approach God, whenever we draw near to Him to worship Him. We are to approach Him as "our Father," and therefore with the affection and confidence of children; but yet as "our Father which is in heaven," and therefore with the reverence and holy fear which become creatures when they address themselves to the great God.

I observed just now that the Lord's Prayer was always considered peculiarly a Christian's prayer, a prayer which none but a Christian could properly offer; and the reason is obvious in these opening words, for none but Christians can address God as their Father. It is true indeed, in one sense, that God is the Father of all men, for all come of Him; but yet by nature all have wandered from Him, and become estranged from Him; nor do, nor can any re-



turn to Him as reconciled children, till they are brought back by Christ. As unbaptized persons, you may call God Father, in anticipation of that sonship to which you hope to be admitted; but you cannot actually and of right call Him so, till by Baptism you become members of Christ, and, as members of Christ, God's children.

Before entering upon the consideration of the several petitions of the Lord's Prayer, I must make one remark upon the order in which they stand.

Of the six petitions which the prayer contains, the first three are for the advancement of God's glory. We do not ask for blessings which directly concern ourselves, till we come to the fourth petition. This shows us very plainly what subjects ought to be foremost in our prayers. In them, as in our conduct generally, we are to seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness<sup>2</sup>. And while we do so, we need have no fear but that all other needful things will be added unto us.

Observe, further, that the prayer throughout runs in the plural number. We say, not "my Father," but "our Father;" not "give me my daily bread," but "give us our daily bread;" and so on to the end. It is true, this may possibly be accounted for by the circumstance that our Lord was speaking not to one person, but to several, when He taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer. But yet Christians have adhered, and rightly, to the very exact words in which He taught it, so strictly, that I suppose no one, though using it by himself, ever ventured to change the plural into the singular, and to say "my" for "our," "me" for "us," "I" for "we." It seems as though our Lord had intended from the first, that the brotherhood and fellowship which we have with one another, as children of the same Father, and members of the same body, should be kept in our thoughts throughout; and that,

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vi, 33.

as we begin by calling God "our Father," so we should remember to the end, that all God's children are our brethren, and, as such, have a claim to be present with us in our thoughts, when we kneel before God. Not, indeed, that we do wrong, when we use the singular number in our other prayers. We have instances of this also in Scripture; yea, we have our blessed Lord's own example. Still, thus much at least seems intimated by the usage I have been referring to, that, whatever may be our practice when we pray at extraordinary times, and with some one or other particular object in view, in our ordinary set prayers our brethren in Christ should always have a place in our thoughts and supplications.

*"Hallowed be Thy Name."*

This is the first petition, and when we use it, we pray, in effect, that God may be had in reverence by us; that all our thoughts of Him, all our behaviour towards Him, all our words respecting Him, may be holy, and reverential, and full of awe; that we may treat sacred things as sacred; that we may hallow His Sabbaths, His Word, His house, His ordinances; that we may have an affectionate regard for His people as His people, and for His ministers as His ministers; that we may ourselves walk worthy of that great Name which is called upon us, taking heed that it be not profaned, through any misconduct of ours, among those who know Him not. And though we pray these things for ourselves in the first instance, yet we include others with ourselves; we pray that God's Name may be hallowed in His Church first, and then throughout the whole world.

*"Thy kingdom come."*

The kingdom of God may be understood in two senses, according as we refer to the kingdom of His grace here, or to the kingdom of His glory hereafter.

We pray here first that God's kingdom may be established and confirmed in our own hearts, and may go on extending itself there till the kingdom of Satan is utterly rooted out and destroyed: in other words, that we may be more and more, day by day, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and may submit ourselves more and more to Him to be ruled and governed by Him; that all carnal affections may die in us, and all things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in us; that we may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh; that we may be enabled to bring under and subdue the evil that is within us, the bad tempers, passions, lusts, affections, which we inherit with our corrupt nature; and that the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and the like, may flourish and abound in us more and more.

And as we pray thus for ourselves, so do we for others also. We pray that God's kingdom may come, in this manner, in the hearts of all who are connected with us, in our families, in our parishes, in our country, in the Church, in all the world.

And this involves the prayer that Christ's religion may be established every where; that the Jews may be brought to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah; that the Gentiles may be led to trust in His Name.

And it involves still further the prayer, that wherever Christianity is established it may prevail in its purity; that all false doctrine and heresy may be extinguished; and that all schisms and divisions among Christians may be healed.

With regard to the kingdom of God's glory we pray, that "He will shortly accomplish the number of His elect, and hasten His kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of His holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory."

*“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”*

We pray that God's will may be done by us actively, and submitted to, acquiesced in, by us, passively.

I. That it may be done by us actively; that is, that we may serve God and obey Him, doing whatsoever He would have us do. And this engages us to take pains to discover what He would have us do.

We pray that God's will may be done by us in earth, as it is done in heaven by His Angels now, and as it will be done there by His Saints hereafter.

Do we ask how God's will is done in heaven? It is done—

1. Universally, and by all. Not one of all the heavenly multitude refuses, or withholds his obedience. There is no rebel will there.

2. Harmoniously and orderly, (even as the sun, moon, and stars, pursue severally their appointed courses,) each knowing and keeping his place, and performing his duties, not even wishing to have them changed.

3. Perfectly. God's whole will is done by each as far as it concerns him to do it. No one leaves any part of his proper work undone.

4. Heartily: with an obedience which springs from love. Not with eye-service therefore, but with a constant wish to please Him.

5. And if heartily, then promptly and cheerfully. There is no delay, no hesitation, no asking of questions, no inventing of excuses, no murmuring nor discontent. Those blessed beings stand ever ready, “hearkening to the voice of His Word;” and the instant that voice is heard, they fly forth on their happy errands.

We pray therefore that God's will may be done on earth, as far as active obedience is concerned, so universally and so harmoniously, so perfectly, so heartily, so promptly, and so cheerfully.

II. And as to passive obedience (the submitting to

God's will, and acquiescing in it); though there can be no example of suffering in heaven, yet we may be sure there is the most entire, hearty, cheerful, ready, acquiescence in God's will, whatever it is, not merely for the reason that there can be no resisting it, but because it is God's will; the will of Him Whose wisdom, goodness, and love are as boundless as His power.

Thus, then, we pray that we may, and that all men may, submit to and acquiesce in God's will, whatever it may be.

And thus, to glance back over the three petitions which we have now considered,—thus are we taught to frame our prayers when we draw nigh to God. The sanctifying of God's great Name, the coming of His kingdom,—the kingdom of His grace here, the kingdom of His glory hereafter,—the fulfilment of His will,—these are the subjects which must ever be nearest our hearts; and, as such, must, in one shape or other, have a foremost, and principal place in our prayers.

We now proceed to the three last petitions:—

*“Give us this day our daily bread.”*

1. We pray here, (to take the words first in their most obvious meaning,) that God will give us all things needful for our bodies: food, raiment, health, strength, at night refreshing rest, and the like.

Yet we do not ask for superfluities or luxuries: we ask for “bread;” for “a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth<sup>3</sup>,” and “having food and raiment we are therewith to be content<sup>4</sup>.”

Neither, again, do we look forward with anxious care, and seek to hoard up a supply, which for a time might seem to make us independent, and set us above the reach of want. We ask God to “give us this day our daily bread,” according to our Lord's direction, “Take no thought” (that is, according to the original,

<sup>3</sup> Luke xii. 15.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 8.



be not anxiously careful) "for the morrow<sup>5</sup>." The Lord will provide; and we may cheerfully leave the future in His hands.

Yet the very circumstance of our asking, while, on the one hand, it is an acknowledgment that the things asked for are God's good gifts, on the other, binds us to diligence in the use of all appointed means for obtaining them.

2. But "man doth not live by bread alone<sup>6</sup>." The soul requires nourishment as well as the body. We ask further, therefore, for spiritual food. And this, in one word, is Christ, who declares of Himself, that He is "the bread of life<sup>7</sup>." We ask, then, that Christ, and that grace which is treasured up in Christ, and is ministered by the Spirit of Christ, may be given us to be the nourishment and support of our souls, in like manner as bread is given us to be the nourishment and support of our bodies.

And here, too, we are taught to live above anxiety. Even in regard to spiritual food, we ask but what we need for the day, and for the wants of the day; being as well assured that God will provide for the morrow in regard to our spiritual necessities, as in regard to our bodily.

And as our prayer for "daily bread," understood of the supply of our bodily wants, involves the necessity of daily diligence in using the means appointed for obtaining that supply, so also the same prayer, understood of the supply of our spiritual wants, involves the necessity of diligence in prayer and the study of God's Holy Word, every day, and in resorting to public worship, and devoutly partaking of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, on those days when opportunity is afforded. All of these, and the last-mentioned in an eminent degree, are means appointed for obtaining the supply of our spiritual wants.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. vi. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Deut. viii. 3.

<sup>7</sup> John vi. 48.

*“And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”*

What we ask for here is, of itself, sufficiently intelligible without further explanation. It were well if we realized habitually our need of forgiveness, and the dreadful consequences of being unforgiven,—the being shut out for ever from God’s presence, and consigned for ever to the abode of devils and devilish men.

Our need of forgiveness is a need that is continually recurring. We are continually contracting fresh guilt, and therefore have continually fresh occasion to ask for forgiveness. Our ordinary prayers can never be complete without embracing this subject.

The form of words, in which the petition is expressed, sets before us the qualification, on our parts, with which we must ask for forgiveness. We beseech God to deal by us, as we deal by those who trespass against ourselves. And, in doing so, we remind ourselves, or ought to do so, that if we forgive not our brethren their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses.

*“And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil.”*

If we could be sure, that, once forgiven, we should never again fall into sin, this petition might seem needless. But we carry about with us evil hearts ; we live in an evil world ; and we are watched by an enemy ever ready to take advantage of the evil that is in our hearts and in the world, to work us evil. Great need have we, therefore, both in the Lord’s Prayer, and in all our prayers, to beseech God to defend us.

We cannot hope, indeed, to be preserved in such wise as that we shall not fall into temptation. Temptation is our necessary portion while we remain on earth. But we may hope, and it is this we pray for, that God will keep us from such temptations as would be too

strong for us; and that, whenever He sees fit to suffer us to be tempted, He will deliver us from the evil one who is watching for our fall, and from the evil into which we are liable to fall; or, in the Apostle's words, that He "will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way for us to escape<sup>s</sup>:"—a prayer, I need hardly remark, which obliges us, if we would show that we are in earnest in offering it, to do all that in us lies to keep ourselves out of temptation; and when, at any time, we are tempted, to watch against being overcome.

These, then, are the three concluding petitions of the Lord's Prayer,—the petitions which relate more immediately to the supply of our own wants. They teach us what should be the subject matter of our daily prayers. No day passes in which we have not occasion to beseech God, in Whose hand is our life, and Whose are all our ways, to give us bread for our bodies, and grace for our souls; to forgive us the sins which day by day we fall into; and to keep us either from entering into temptation, or, if He does suffer us to enter, from being overcome.

*"For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever." Amen."*

The prayer concludes with a solemn act of praise and adoration, wherein we acknowledge God as the Great King, Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, unto Whose power all creatures in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, are subject, and for Whose glory all things are and were created: the thought of which, as it should fill us with the deepest awe and reverence, so should it, at the same time, inspire us with lively confidence that whatsoever we have asked according to His will, shall, through the merits of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, most surely be performed. And in token of our belief of this, as well as

<sup>s</sup> 1 Cor. x. 13.

of the sincerity and earnestness with which we have offered up our petitions, and ascribed our praises, we gather up the whole, as it were, into one emphatic word, and, in that, breathe it forth again, saying, "Amen,"—so be it,—God grant every thing we have prayed for, God accept every ascription of praise that we have offered to Him.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

As the time appointed for Baptism drew on, it was the clergyman's custom, whose method of preparing his candidates for that Sacrament I am relating, to read over the baptismal service with them, that they might be familiar with it beforehand, and might use it with understanding when they came to present themselves at the holy font. I will go over the service as it stands in the Prayer Book, accompanying it with such remarks as he used to make.

The service is entitled, "THE MINISTRATION OF BAPTISM TO SUCH AS ARE OF RIPER YEARS, AND ARE ABLE TO ANSWER FOR THEMSELVES."

Our Prayer Book had at first no service for the Baptism of grown-up persons. For when it was compiled, cases of adult Baptism were of rare occurrence. But, partly owing to the rise and increase of sects which denied the lawfulness or necessity of infant Baptism, partly owing to the confusion and neglect of religious ordinances which attended the civil war in the reign of Charles the First, it was found necessary, when the Prayer Book was reviewed in the year 1661, to add the present service "for the Baptism of such as are of Riper Years." Unhappily the same causes, still in operation, and strengthened by the rapid in-

crease of a population outgrowing the provision made for its spiritual wants, render the service more necessary than ever; while happily, at the same time, fields have been opened out for its use, among the heathen nations, to an extent of which those who compiled it little dreamed.

The following directions, ("rubrics," as they are called), are prefixed to the service:—

"¶ When any such persons, as are of riper years, are to be baptized, timely notice shall be given to the bishop, or whom he shall appoint for that purpose, a week before at the least, by the parents, or some other discreet persons; that so due care may be taken for their examination, whether they be sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion; and that they may be exhorted to prepare themselves with prayers and fasting for the receiving of this holy Sacrament.

"¶ And if they shall be found fit, then the god-fathers and godmothers (the people being assembled upon the Sunday or Holy-day appointed) shall be ready to present them at the font immediately after the second lesson, either at Morning or Evening Prayer, as the curate in his discretion shall think fit.

"¶ And standing there, the priest shall ask, whether any of the persons here presented be baptized or no: if they shall answer, No; then shall the priest say thus."

The first of these rubrics provides against persons presenting themselves for Baptism without being sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion. Timely notice, therefore, is required to be given beforehand to the bishop, or whom he shall appoint. And they are to be exhorted to prepare themselves, in the interval, with prayers and fasting, for the receiving of this holy Sacrament.

The suitableness both of the provision, and of the exhortation accompanying it, is obvious. Men are not to be admitted into the most deeply solemn cove-



nant, into which they can possibly enter, without its being ascertained that they have a competent knowledge of the terms of the covenant. Nor is an undertaking, on which their eternal happiness depends, to be entered on without earnest prayer to God for His blessing,—prayer quickened and made more intense by fasting, according to the custom of the Church in its purest times. I have already spoken on this head in a previous chapter.

The second rubric appoints the time for the service. It must be on a Sunday or Holy-day, either at Morning or Evening Prayer, immediately after the second lesson. The reasons for its being thus public may be gathered from the first rubric prefixed to the office for the Baptism of Infants; namely, as well for that the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's Church, as also because in the Baptism of others every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism. I may add, in Bishop Bull's words, another reason; namely, that "it is most for the interest" of the person seeking Baptism "to be so baptized, that he may have the benefit of the united prayers of a full Christian congregation, which is much to be valued<sup>9</sup>." As it may often happen, however, that the present arrangement of the services of the Church may prevent a compliance with this direction, it would be well for the person to be baptized to bring to church with him as many of his religious relations and friends as he can.

The person to be baptized is to be presented for Baptism by his godfathers and godmothers. For godfathers and godmothers are required in adult as well as in infant Baptism; only with this difference in their use: in the case of infants, they both answer in the name of the child to be baptized, and also are wit-

<sup>9</sup> Bp. Bull's Discourse on the principal parts of the Pastoral Office.

nesses of his Baptism; in the case of adults, they are witnesses only, the person to be baptized answering in his own name. They are witnesses, then, that the person for whom they stand has been baptized, and, in Baptism, solemnly received into covenant with God; that, on the one hand, he has been dedicated to God's service; on the other, he has been acknowledged by God as His servant—yea, more than servant—as His child. They are witnesses to vindicate his claim to be acknowledged as one of Christ's flock, if any one should call his privileges in question. They are witnesses to put him in mind of his duties and responsibilities, if he should prove forgetful of them, and walk unworthily of his Christian calling. They are witnesses to testify against him, if, in spite of their remonstrances, he should still persist in casting off his allegiance to that Lord to Whose service he was solemnly dedicated in their presence<sup>1</sup>.

The third rubric is intended to guard against the possibility of any one being baptized a second time: for Baptism, once administered, is never to be repeated; a rule which the Church has always adhered to with such strictness, that she does not allow of a second Baptism, even though the Baptism already received

<sup>1</sup> Of the exercise of the office in this last-mentioned particular we have the following instance in the history of the early Church. There was one Elpidiphorus, a citizen of Carthage, who, having for a long time lived in the communion of the Church, at last forsook it, and became an Arian. Persecution arising against the Church, many of her true children were brought before him, now holding the office of a judge, and, among others, one Muritta, a deacon, who had been his godfather when he was baptized. This man, being ready to be put to the rack to oblige him to deny the faith, held up the white robes with which the apostate judge had been clothed at his Baptism, and thus spoke to him; "These are thy garments, O Elpidiphorus, thou minister of error, which shall accuse thee, when the majesty of the Great Judge shall appear. These are they that were girt about thee when thou camest spotless out of the holy font. These are they that shall bitterly pursue thee, when thou shalt begin to take thy portion in the flames of hell; because thou hast clothed thyself with cursing as with a garment, and hast cast off the sacred obligation of thy Baptism, and the true faith which thou didst then profess and take upon thee."

may have been administered by heretics, or such as are otherwise separated from her communion, provided that that Baptism have been administered with water, and in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

All being now ready, the clergyman officiating proceeds with the following exhortation, setting forth the lost and ruined condition in which every man is before Baptism, (both having been born in sin, and having added to his original guilt many actual transgressions), the consequent necessity of a new birth, and of Baptism in order to that new birth; and then beseeching the congregation present to offer up their earnest prayers to God, that the persons to be baptized may receive the full benefit of Baptism; that they may be "baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made lively members of the same."

"Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, (and that which is born of the flesh is flesh,) and they that are in the flesh cannot please God, but live in sin, committing many actual transgressions; and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost; I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous goodness He will grant to these persons that which by nature they cannot have; that they may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made lively members of the same."

This exhortation, on the one hand, shows the advantage which the Church looks for from the Baptism being administered in public, namely, the securing of the prayers of the congregation in behalf of the persons to be baptized; and on the other, points out the duty of the congregation on the occasion. They are not to look on as indifferent spectators, who have no

concern in what is going forward; they are to join their prayers to those of the parties more immediately engaged, as bearing in mind that the new members, now about to be engrafted into Christ's body, will become, in fact, fellow-members with themselves.

“¶ Then shall the Priest say,

“Let us pray.

“¶ And here” (mark this direction) “all the congregation shall kneel:” not the parties more immediately concerned only, but the whole congregation.

“Almighty and everlasting God, Who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing, by water; and also didst safely lead the children of Israel Thy people through the Red Sea, figuring thereby Thy holy Baptism; and by the Baptism of Thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan, didst sanctify the element of water to the mystical washing away of sin; We beseech Thee, for Thine infinite mercies, that Thou wilt mercifully look upon these Thy servants; wash them and sanctify them with the Holy Ghost, that they, being delivered from Thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church; and being stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally they may come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with Thee world without end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

“Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that need, the helper of all that flee to Thee for succour, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead; We call upon Thee for these persons, that they, coming to Thy holy Baptism, may receive remission of their sins by spiritual regeneration. Receive them, O Lord, as Thou hast promised by Thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: So give now unto us that ask; let us that

seek find; open the gate unto us that knock; that these persons may enjoy the everlasting benediction of Thy heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which Thou hast promised by Christ our Lord. Amen."

In the former of these prayers, "we commemorate how God did typify this salvation which is now given by Baptism, in saving Noah and his family by water, and by carrying the Israelites safely through the Red Sea; as also how Christ Himself, by being baptized, sanctified water to the mystical washing away of sin<sup>2</sup>," consecrated it, that is, to this use. And upon these grounds we pray that God will be pleased to make the Sacrament effectual to the washing and sanctifying of the persons now to be baptized, and so to assist them with His grace, that they may henceforward abide in fellowship with Christ, and continue steadfast in the same unto the end.

In the second prayer, we express the same desires in other words, beseeching God that the persons to be baptized may be washed from their sins, and may be made partakers of that eternal kingdom which He hath promised by Christ our Lord.

"¶ Then shall the people stand up, and the priest shall say,

"Hear the words of the Gospel, written by St. John, in the third chapter, beginning at the first verse.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?

<sup>2</sup> Wheatly on the Common Prayer, p. 344.



Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The exhortation which follows, after gathering out of this passage the necessity of Baptism where it may be had; out of another<sup>3</sup>, the great benefit we reap thereby; and out of two others<sup>4</sup>, the qualifications required in order to the right reception of it, goes on to bid the congregation persuade themselves, that whatever benefits belong to Baptism by God's promise and appointment, namely, forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life in His kingdom, shall be made over to the persons now about to be baptized, provided only that they are truly repentant for their past sins, and are coming unto God, through Christ, with a sincere and lively faith: and it concludes by calling upon the congregation to thank God, putting words of mingled thanksgiving and prayer into their mouths for that purpose,—of thanksgiving for God's great goodness in having called them to the knowledge of His grace and faith in Him; of prayer, that He will be pleased to increase their knowledge and confirm their faith, and at the same time to give His Holy Spirit to the persons about to be baptized, that they may be born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation.

"Beloved, ye hear in this Gospel the express words of our Saviour Christ, that except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the

<sup>3</sup> Mark xvi. 15, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Acts ii. 37—40; and 1 Pet. iii. 21.

kingdom of God. Whereby ye may perceive the great necessity of this Sacrament, where it may be had. Likewise, immediately before His ascension into heaven, (as we read in the last chapter of St. Mark's Gospel,) He gave command to His disciples, saying, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Which also sheweth unto us the great benefit we reap thereby. For which cause St. Peter the Apostle, when upon his first preaching of the Gospel many were pricked at the heart, and said to him and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? replied and said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words exhorted he them, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. For, (as the same Apostle testifieth in another place), even Baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that He will favourably receive these present persons, truly repenting, and coming unto Him by faith; that He will grant them remission of their sins, and bestow upon them the Holy Ghost; that He will give them the blessing of eternal life, and make them partakers of His everlasting kingdom.

“ Wherefore we being thus persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards these persons, declared by His Son Jesus Christ; let us faithfully and devoutly give thanks to Him, and say,

“ Almighty and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give Thee humble thanks, for that Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of Thy grace, and

faith in Thee: Increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in us evermore. Give Thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that they may be born again, and be made heirs of everlasting salvation; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen."

We now come to the solemn and formal stipulating of the conditions of the covenant, preparatory to the actual ratification which is to follow. The minister, speaking in Christ's behalf, first reminds the persons to be baptized of the promises which Christ makes on His part. Then he calls upon them, in the presence of their witnesses, that is, their godfathers and godmothers, and of the whole congregation, to make on their parts the promises which Christ looks for at their hands; demanding of them the several questions, and requiring in reply the several answers which we have already considered at length<sup>5</sup>.

"¶ Then the priest shall speak to the persons to be baptized on this wise:

"Well-beloved, who are come hither desiring to receive holy Baptism, ye have heard how the congregation hath prayed, that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive you and bless you, to release you of your sins, to give you the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life. Ye have heard also, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in His holy Word to grant all those things that we have prayed for; which promise He, for His part, will most surely keep and perform.

"Wherefore, after this promise made by Christ, ye must also faithfully, for your part, promise in the presence of these your witnesses and this whole congregation, that ye will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy Word, and obediently keep His commandments.

"¶ Then shall the priest demand of each of the

<sup>5</sup> See part ii. ch. ii. p. 36, &c.

persons to be baptized, severally, these questions following:

“ Q. Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?

“ A. I renounce them all.

“ Q. Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?

“ And in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son our Lord? And that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; that He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that He went down into hell, and also did rise again the third day; that He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and from thence shall come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead?

“ And dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of Saints; the remission of sins; the resurrection of the flesh; and everlasting life after death?

“ A. All this I stedfastly believe.

“ Q. Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?

“ A. That is my desire.

“ Q. Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?

“ A. I will endeavour so to do, God being my helper.”

These questions and answers have already, as I said, been considered at length. I will only remark further, that the method of stipulating by question and answer seems to have been practised since the very earliest times. For St. Peter calls Baptism, as though he were referring to some such custom, “ the answer of a good conscience <sup>6</sup>,” and in the primitive Church,

<sup>6</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 21.

questions were always put to the persons baptized, which persons of full age answered themselves, and children by their representatives, that is, by their godfathers and godmothers<sup>7</sup>.

“¶ Then the priest shall say,” &c.

Here follow four short petitions, founded upon God's promises annexed to Baptism, beseeching God that those promises may be made good to the persons now presented to Him. They point out once more, what the preceding prayers have implied again and again—what are the benefits which are to be looked for in that Sacrament; and they show, as the whole service does most markedly, how earnestly intent the Church is in seeking the spiritual and eternal welfare of those whom she is about to receive within her fold:

“O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in these persons may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in them. Amen.

“Grant that all carnal affections may die in them, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in them. Amen.

“Grant that they may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph, against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Amen.

“Grant that they, being here dedicated to Thee by our office and ministry, may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded, through Thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, Who dost live, and govern all things, world without end. Amen.”

The next prayer is the prayer of consecration. We beseech God to sanctify the water with which the font is filled, to the mystical washing away of sin; which is, in other words, that His blessing may in such wise accompany it, that, while the bodies of the persons baptized are washed outwardly, their souls may be washed inwardly by the application of the blood of

<sup>7</sup> Wheatly, p. 348.



Jesus Christ, and purified at the same time from all carnal and corrupt affections by the cleansing efficacy of the Spirit of Christ.

“ Almighty, everliving God, Whose most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of His most precious side both water and blood, and gave commandment to His disciples, that they should go teach all nations, and baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Regard, we beseech Thee, the supplications of this congregation; sanctify this Water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that the persons now to be baptized therein may receive the fulness of Thy grace, and ever remain in the number of Thy faithful and elect children, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“ ¶ Then shall the priest take each person to be baptized by the right hand, and placing him conveniently by the font, according to his discretion, shall ask the godfathers and godmothers the name; and then shall dip him in the water, or pour water upon him, saying,

“ N. I baptize thee In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

Now here we have to observe two particulars: first, the action to be used; and secondly, the words with which the action is to be accompanied.

1. The action to be used is the application of water to the body of the person baptized; and this, either by dipping him in the font, or else by pouring water upon him. There can be no question but that originally dipping was the ordinary rule, as it still is in the East to this day: but in the Western Churches, the custom of pouring water upon the person baptized has prevailed for many ages. Our Church, however, you will observe, expressly names the one method as well as the other; and it is free to the person to be baptized, to be baptized by dipping, if he thinks that he shall thereby more closely comply with our Lord's

institution; though, indeed, the more reasonable view of the matter would seem to be, that it is the application of water to the body which is the essential part, and that, where this is complied with, the manner of the application is but of secondary importance.

So far as they are emblematical of the effects of Baptism, both dipping and the pouring on of water are significant. In both cases, there is a washing of the body from bodily defilement, which represents the washing of the soul from spiritual defilement.

In dipping, there is, as it were, acted out the death and burial of the old man, and the resurrection of the new man, as is very plainly intimated in St. Paul's words, "We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life<sup>8</sup>." "Buried with Christ in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead<sup>9</sup>." Moreover, the putting off the clothes, in order to this sort of Baptism, was significant of the putting off the old man, as the putting on the new garments, which were put on on coming up from the font, was significant of the putting on the new man; as the same Apostle intimates, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him That created him<sup>1</sup>."

With regard to the words with which the act of baptizing is accompanied, they are those which our Lord appointed when He instituted the Sacrament. The minister, taking the person to be baptized by the right hand, and calling him by his new name, says, "I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

<sup>8</sup> Rom. vi. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Col. ii. 12.

<sup>1</sup> Col. iii. 9, 10. See also Col. ii. 11. Eph. iv. 22—24.

Now to baptize any one in the Name of God, is to put God's Name upon that person. And forasmuch as the words spoken by God's minister, when he speaks as God's minister, are not his words, but God's, God does, in effect, put His Name upon the person baptized. He says to him, as He said to Abraham when He admitted him into covenant with Himself, "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."

But it is very much to be observed, that, as the covenant, which is signed and sealed in Baptism, is a new covenant, so the Name by which God is described in the form used in Baptism is a new Name, corresponding to the revelation made of God in that new covenant. When God appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, "He appeared unto them by the Name of God Almighty;" when He revealed Himself unto Moses and the children of Israel, He revealed Himself by the Name of "Jehovah," or "the LORD<sup>2</sup>." But now, the covenant being changed, His name is changed. We are baptized, not in the name of God Almighty, not in the Name of Jehovah or the LORD, but "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

And observe, it is not in the "names" of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as though there were three distinct Gods with whom we are brought into covenant, but in the "Name," the singular number being used, as though to imply that, while there are indeed three distinct Persons in the Godhead, there is yet but one God.

God then, in putting His Name upon the person baptized, does acknowledge Himself as the God of that person. He declares that "He is not ashamed to be called his God<sup>3</sup>;"—the Father to be called his Creator, the Son to be called his Redeemer, the Holy Ghost to be called his Sanctifier; and thenceforward each of these Divine Persons stands ready to fulfil His

<sup>2</sup> See Exod. vi. 3; and iii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. xi. 16.

own office towards him, whereof the very fact of his Baptism is a sure token and pledge.

This is the aspect under which the form of words used in Baptism is to be viewed, when considered as signifying what God intends on His part. If we look to what the person baptized implies, or ought to imply, on his, it is, that he accepts God with deep reverence and heartfelt thankfulness as his God;—the Father as the fountain and source of all blessings, to be the fountain and source of all good to him; the Son, as his Redeemer, to redeem him; the Holy Ghost, as his Sanctifier, to sanctify him; and dedicates himself—his soul and body, and all that he has—unreservedly to the service of this great Being. And herein is fulfilled, in the New Testament sense, what was long ago foretold by the prophet in the language of the Old Testament, “One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel<sup>4</sup>.”

One other remark remains to be made, that, as God’s Name is changed in the form used in Baptism, so the name of the person baptized is changed also. The minister is directed to ask the godfathers and godmothers the name which thenceforward he is to bear, and then to address him by that name, “John,” “Charles,” or whatever it may be, “I baptize thee in the Name,” &c. This custom, though no where expressly commanded in Scripture, has prevailed in the Church from the beginning; and it was doubtless grafted upon the corresponding custom used among the Jews, of giving the name at circumcision. And that custom was so far of divine authority, that the first instance of it was the change of Abram’s name to Abraham, which God made when He instituted the covenant of circumcision, and admitted Abraham into that covenant<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. xliv. 5.

<sup>5</sup> See Gen. xvii. 5. 10.

And this new name is a memorial to the person baptized, and is designed to continue such while he lives, of the covenant into which God has graciously admitted him. It is a memorial to him, on the one hand, of the new relationship into which he has been brought, and of the blessed privileges and advantages which are to flow from it. Considering that God's minister, speaking in God's behalf, was the first who addressed him by it, he may fitly appropriate to himself the words spoken by God to Israel of old, "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour<sup>6</sup>."

And as his Christian name is to be a memorial to each baptized person of his privileges as a Christian, so is it also of his duties and responsibilities. It is to remind him that he is not his own, that he has been solemnly dedicated to Christ, and, in Christ, to the Father, by the Holy Spirit, and that he is bound to consecrate himself, with all the faculties both of his soul and body, to the service of his Divine Master.

I have dwelt the longer upon this part of the baptismal service, because it is the kernel, so to speak, of the whole, or, to change the figure, the centre around which all the rest revolves. As to what remains, I shall be more brief.

In administering the Baptism which is just concluded, the minister spoke and acted in God's name; God did, by him, admit the person baptized into covenant with Himself, and graft him as a living member into the mystical body of His Son. In the words

<sup>6</sup> Isa. xliii. 1—3.



which follow, the minister may be regarded as speaking in the name of the congregation. They do by him own God's seal now set upon the person baptized, and acknowledge him as one of their own number, a fellow member with themselves of Christ's body; and they sign him with the sign of the cross upon his forehead, to remind him that he is now become a soldier and servant of the crucified Jesus, and as such must take up his cross daily and follow Him.

“We receive this person into the congregation of Christ's flock; and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end. Amen.”

The Church of England has sometimes been blamed for retaining the use of the cross in Baptism, as though, in so doing, she were retaining some of the leaven of the corrupt Church of Rome, which ought to have been put away. Her own defence of the practice, contained in her thirtieth canon, is more weighty than any words of mine can be. Let her speak for herself:—

“The honour and dignity of the name of the cross begat a reverend estimation even in the Apostles' times, (for aught that is known to the contrary,) of the sign of the cross, which the Christians shortly after used in all their actions: thereby making an outward show and profession, even to the astonishment of the Jews, that they were not ashamed to acknowledge Him for their Lord and Saviour Who died for them upon the cross. And this sign they did not only use themselves with a kind of glory, when they met with any Jews, but signed therewith their children when they were christened, to dedicate them by that badge to His service, Whose benefits bestowed upon them in Baptism the sign of the cross did represent. And this use of the sign of the cross in Baptism was held

in the primitive Church, as well by the Greeks as the Latins, with one consent and great applause. At which time, if any had opposed themselves against it, they would certainly have been censured as enemies of the name of the cross, and consequently of Christ's merits, the sign whereof they could no better endure . . .

“It must be confessed that, in process of time, the sign of the cross was greatly abused in the Church of Rome, especially after that corruption of Popery had once possessed it. But the abuse of a thing doth not take away the lawful use of it. Nay, so far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any suchlike Churches, in all things which they held and practised, that, as the Apology of the Church of England confesseth, it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies which do neither endamage the Church of God, nor offend the minds of sober men; and only departed from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves, in their ancient integrity, and from the Apostolical Churches which were their first founders. In which respect, among some other very ancient ceremonies, the sign of the cross in Baptism hath been retained in this Church . . . This resolution and practice of our Church hath been allowed and approved . . . because, indeed, the use of this sign in Baptism was ever accompanied here with such sufficient cautions and exceptions against all Popish superstitions and error, as in the like cases are either fit or convenient.

“First, the Church of England, since the abolishing of Popery, hath ever held and taught, and so doth hold and teach still, that the sign of the cross used in Baptism is no part of the substance of that Sacrament; for when the minister, dipping the infant in water, or laying water upon the face of it, (as the manner also is,) hath pronounced these words, ‘I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

Holy Ghost,' the infant is fully and perfectly baptized. So, as the sign of the cross being afterwards used, doth neither add any thing to the virtue and perfection of Baptism, nor, being omitted, doth detract any thing from the effect and substance of it.

"Secondly, it is apparent in the Communion book, that the infant baptized is, by virtue of Baptism, before it be signed with the sign of the cross, received into the congregation of Christ's flock, as a perfect member thereof, and not by any power ascribed unto the sign of the cross. So that for the very remembrance of the cross, which is very precious to all them that rightly believe in Jesus Christ, and in the other respects mentioned, the Church of England hath retained still the sign of it in Baptism; following therein the primitive and Apostolical Churches, and accounting it a lawful outward ceremony and honourable badge, whereby the infant is dedicated to the service of Him That died upon the cross, as by the words used in the Book of Common Prayer it may appear.

"Lastly, the use of the sign of the cross in Baptism being thus purged from all Popish superstitions and error, and reduced in the Church of England to the primary institution of it, upon those true rules of doctrine concerning things indifferent, which are consonant to the word of God and the judgment of all the ancient Fathers, we hold it the part of every private man, both minister and other, reverently to retain the true use of it prescribed by public authority; considering that things of themselves indifferent do in some sort alter their natures, when they are either commanded or forbidden by a lawful magistrate; and may not be omitted at every man's pleasure contrary to the law, when they be commanded, nor used when they are prohibited."

The Baptism is now complete. The person baptized has solemnly taken God for his God, and God has solemnly received him as His servant, and set His mark upon him in token that He has done so. And,

moreover, the congregation have owned and acknowledged him in consequence as one of their own body.

But though the Baptism is complete, yet the service must not be abruptly broken off. The congregation are exhorted to join together in thanking God for the great benefits bestowed upon their new brother, and in praying that he may have grace to continue in the holy fellowship into which he has been admitted, and to walk worthy of the high calling wherewith he has been called.

“¶ Then shall the priest say,

“Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that these persons are regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto Him, that they may lead the rest of their life according to this beginning.

“¶ Then shall be said the Lord’s Prayer, all kneeling.

“Our Father, Which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.”

The suitableness of the Lord’s Prayer in this place is obvious. With what lively feelings must the newborn Christian call upon God as his Father, now for the first time his Father in all the full meaning of that endearing name! How delightful the thought, that the same change in his condition which has made God his Father, has made both those now present and all the saints of God his brethren; so that the form of his address is not “my Father,” but “our Father!” With what intense earnestness will he pray that God’s Name may be hallowed, His kingdom come, and His will done in earth as in heaven, whether he regards himself, or his fellow-Christians, or the whole world in these petitions! How much meaning will he put into the re-

quest for daily bread, looking one while to the supply of his bodily, another to the supply of his spiritual, wants; rejoicing at the same time with a thankful heart at the thought that he has now One on whom he may, with full confidence, cast all his care for both, knowing that He careth for him! With what deep seriousness, and, at the same time, with what assured persuasion that he shall be heard—yea, has been heard, and his prayer answered—will he beseech God to forgive him his trespasses; and how cordially will he add, as though pouring out the overflowings of a heart forgiven and ready to forgive all in its deep thankfulness and love, “as we forgive them that trespass against us!” With what humility, distrust of himself, yet full trust in God, and intense earnestness, will he pray that he may not be suffered to fall, but may be delivered from evil, and from that evil one out of whose kingdom and power he has now been delivered, and translated into the blessed “kingdom of Christ and of God”!

The prayer which follows is a prayer of mingled thanksgiving and supplication, in accordance with the exhortation with which the congregation were just now exhorted. It is nearly word for word the same as the prayer which preceded the questions put to the person baptized, when called upon to make his baptismal promises, except that that person is now included among those for whose Christian calling thanks are given, and that, whereas in the former case the prayer was that he might be born again, and might be made an heir of everlasting salvation, now it is, that, having become such, he may continue God’s servant, and attain God’s promises, by the Holy Spirit’s aid, and through the Saviour’s merits.

The service is now ended. Yet before the congregation separate, a word of exhortation is addressed first to the godfathers and godmothers, and then to the newly baptized persons themselves:—



“¶ Then, all standing up, the priest shall use this exhortation following; speaking to the godfathers and godmothers first.

“Forasmuch as these persons have promised in your presence to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve Him; ye must remember, that it is your part and duty to put them in mind, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they have now made before this congregation, and especially before you their chosen witnesses. And ye are also to call upon them to use all diligence to be rightly instructed in God’s holy Word; that so they may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world.”

The godfathers and godmothers are here reminded that their duty is twofold. First, as they have stood by as the chosen witnesses of the Baptism which has just been administered, it is their part to put the persons baptized in mind of the engagement they have entered into. And they must take care that they do not let their office prove an empty name in this respect. It may happily be the case, that they may have no occasion to put those for whom they have stood in mind, they being sufficiently mindful themselves: but if otherwise, they will not be true either to themselves, to their godchildren, to the Church, or to God, unless they warn them of the sin and danger of going back from their promises. Secondly, the other part of the duty of the godfathers and godmothers is to call upon the persons baptized to use all diligence to be rightly instructed in God’s holy Word. For those persons must not look upon themselves as now perfect and complete in Christian knowledge and Christian progress. On the contrary, they are but as new-born babes, and, as such, are to “desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby<sup>s</sup>.” It is

<sup>s</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 2.

very plain from this exhortation, with what affectionate interest it behoves sponsors to watch over those for whom they have stood, through the remainder of their course; and, (need I add?) with what earnest diligence to take heed to themselves, and cultivate their own progress in divine knowledge, and growth in holiness.

“(¶ And then, speaking to the new baptized persons, he shall proceed, and say,)

“And as for you, who have now by Baptism put on Christ, it is your part and duty also, being made the children of God, and of the light, by faith in Jesus Christ, to walk answerably to your Christian calling, and as becometh the children of light; remembering always that Baptism representeth unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that as He died, and rose again for us; so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.”

In this exhortation the persons baptized are first reminded of the high and blessed privileges to which they have just been admitted. And it is worthy of remark, that these privileges, though it is implied throughout the service that they are formally conveyed and made over to them in Baptism, are yet distinctly stated to be made theirs “by faith in Jesus Christ.” The truth is, that our Church, following closely in the steps of God’s Word, while it reserves to Baptism its place in the matter of our salvation, is careful not to thrust aside faith from its place. Each has its proper and distinct office. Faith leads us to enter into covenant with God in Christ. Baptism is the actual signing and sealing of the covenant, in the precise method which God Himself has prescribed. But to proceed. The newly baptized persons, having been reminded of their newly acquired privileges, are

exhorted to walk answerably to them, and reminded that their whole lives, from this time forward, are to be such as the figure of their Baptism has shadowed forth. For, as Baptism was a sort of burial, whether signified by the plunging of the body under water, or by the pouring of water upon the body, so they are to be henceforward as though their old nature had died with Christ, and been buried with Him in Baptism, and as though they had risen again with Christ, on their coming forth from the sacred font, to live with Him a new life in righteousness and true holiness.

“¶ It is expedient that every person, thus baptized, should be confirmed by the bishop as soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be; that so he may be admitted to the Holy Communion.”

Of Confirmation something will be said in the next chapter.

END OF PART II.

## PART III.

### CONDUCT AFTER BAPTISM.

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#### ON WALKING WORTHILY OF OUR CHRISTIAN CALLING.

THE exhortation, and the rubric with which the baptismal service closes, did not, in the limits which the nature of the case prescribed, admit of lengthened remark. Nor was it the custom of the clergyman, whose method of proceeding with his catechumens I am following, to say more than I have said above, at the time of going over the service. Still the exhortation and the rubric referred to would obviously suggest, even if the fitness of the thing itself had not suggested, that, before he parted with those in whom he felt so lively an interest, he should set before them at greater length than he had yet done, both the difficulties of the course on which they had entered, and at the same time the duties required of them, in order to the surmounting of those difficulties, and the walking worthily of the high calling with which they had been called.

You are now Christ's sworn soldiers, (he would say to them, when he met them again after their Baptism), His cross has been set upon your foreheads, in token that from this time forward you must follow in His steps. You have been delivered out of the kingdom of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. But do not suppose that you are, therefore, beyond Satan's reach. Rest assured that he will still pursue you, and that he will leave no means untried, if in any wise he may recover his lost dominion over you. You have been washed from the guilt of all your past sins,

and you have come forth without spot or stain to sully the whiteness of your Baptismal robes. But, remember, you may contract fresh guilt: nay, in such a world as this, and with hearts such as ours, you cannot fail to do so. The power of sin within you has been broken, for the Holy Spirit has been given you wherewith to break it; but do not fall into the mistake of thinking that it is in such wise broken, that the utmost care and watchfulness will not be required on your parts both to keep it broken, and to break it more effectually, or, in other words, to cherish the presence of that blessed Being who has taken up His abode within you, and to obtain a larger and larger measure of it. It is incredible how much error prevails, and what wrong notions are entertained respecting the nature of regeneration, simply because people do not consider that the condition of every regenerate person, while he remains on earth, is such as I have described. They seem to expect that the new-born Christian should pass at once from the state of infancy to that of manhood, without any intervening stage. They seem to forget that he has need of continual watchfulness and continual diligence, lest the good work which has been begun in him should be left incomplete; lest the salvation, of which the first-fruits have been bestowed upon him, should not be perfected. And if, in any instances, through neglect of these, the Holy Spirit is grieved, and the grace, once given, recalled, and the dominion of Satan, once broken, re-established with greater power than ever in the heart, they are ready to doubt whether regeneration ever took place.

You see, then, what your calling, or, rather let me say, our calling is. True, God has delivered us out of the kingdom of Satan, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; but then it is for us to take heed most diligently that we be not again brought under the power of the evil one, and our last state become worse than the first. All through our course, we must be sober, we must be vigilant, remembering that



“our adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour<sup>1</sup>.” True, again, God has washed us from our guilt in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, and sent us forth with garments pure and white, and unsullied by a single stain: but then it is for us to keep them such. And though we cannot hope to walk so warily and circumspectly in the midst of this evil world, as that they shall not again and again contract defilement, yet the same fountain, in which they were washed in the first instance, still continues open, and we may and must resort to it from time to time, whenever we have need, taking care, however, that we come with unfeigned repentance and undoubting faith. True, once more, God has given us His Holy Spirit to sanctify us by breaking the power of sin within us, and conforming us to the image of His Son; but it is for us to yield ourselves unreservedly to the influence of that Divine Being, and to cleanse ourselves, by His help, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God<sup>2</sup>.

Holiness, indeed, is the very end and object for which God has called us to become His people. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them<sup>3</sup>.” And if we fail of that end and object, we so far prove unfaithful to our covenant, and provoke God to cast us off as such. “I am the true vine,” says our Lord, “and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. . . . Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit<sup>4</sup>.”

It is most true indeed, that when we have done all we can do, and have made the greatest possible progress in holiness, we are still unprofitable servants. There is nothing meritorious in our attainments. Nay, the best and most perfect of them need forgiveness,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. v. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. ii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> See 2 Cor. vii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> John xv. 1, 2. 8.

and can be accepted with God only through Christ, and for Christ's sake. Still God looks for them at our hands. They are the genuine fruits of that faith, by which we were brought nigh to Him in the first instance, and are kept nigh to Him thenceforward. They are the service which we stipulated and pledged ourselves to render when we entered into covenant with God.

There is one thing which I would very particularly beg you to remark, in reference to the holiness of which I have been speaking,—that it consists not merely in outward actions, but in inward graces also; or rather that it consists in inward graces, and outward actions springing from inward graces. And it is our duty, as Christians, while we labour to frame our lives and conversation outwardly according to the rule and standard of God's Word, to give our especial care and attention to our hearts, as knowing that the only effectual way of keeping the former such as they should be, is to keep our hearts such as they should be. And this, in truth, is one of the chief marks which distinguish the advancing Christian,—his watchfulness, yea his increasing watchfulness, over his heart. He makes a conscience not only of his outward actions, as remembering that he shall be judged according to his works at the day of judgment<sup>5</sup>, not only of his words, as remembering that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account before God<sup>6</sup>, but even of his thoughts, his temper, his affections, his desires, as remembering that the God with whom he has to do is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart<sup>7</sup>. And all this not merely on great occasions, which are but of rare occurrence, but continually. His one great concern is to approve himself before God at all times, in all places, in all duties, in all companies,—in one word, “to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long<sup>8</sup>.”

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. v. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. iv. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xii. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Prov. xxiii. 17.

This, then, is to be your aim. But it is an aim which you cannot accomplish in your own strength. You need God's grace to enable you to accomplish it. You must be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might<sup>9</sup>." And this brings me to the means which you must use for procuring a continued supply of God's grace.

### 1. *Confirmation.*

The first of these which I shall mention is Confirmation. And I mention it first, both because, in the first ages of Christianity, it was always looked upon as intimately connected with Baptism, and also because our own Church, keeping close to the practice of those ages, directs you, in the rubric with which she closes the baptismal service, to seek it as soon after your Baptism as conveniently may be. Nor can you, according to her rules, be admitted to the Holy Communion till you have been confirmed; or, at any rate, till you are ready and desirous to be confirmed.

The object of Confirmation is not merely that you may confirm the covenant you have now entered into, by repeating the promises and vows which you made at your Baptism, but that the bishop, as God's chief minister, laying his hands on your head, with prayer in your behalf, you may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to confirm and strengthen you in your purposes and resolutions, and to endue you with grace to perform them.

The Church has retained this service from the earliest times, following therein the practice of the Apostles. For we read, that when Philip, who was an inferior minister, had made many converts in Samaria, and had baptized them, the Apostles Peter and John went down from Jerusalem, "who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet He was fallen

<sup>9</sup> Eph. vi. 10.

upon none of them; only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost<sup>1</sup>." In like manner, when St. Paul had caused certain disciples whom he found at Ephesus to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, he laid his hands on them, "and the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied<sup>2</sup>." It is true that in both of these instances the presence of the Holy Ghost was manifested by the exercise of one or another of the miraculous powers at that time bestowed in the Church: but this does not hinder but that the sanctifying graces of the Holy Spirit accompanied those miraculous powers, wherever the persons on whom the Apostles' hands were laid were prepared to receive them. They were not, indeed, given as for the first time. The Holy Spirit had been already given in Baptism, as the source and fountain of spiritual life. The same gift, sometimes together with miraculous powers, was now given, in enlarged measure, for the confirmation and increase of that life. And though miraculous gifts have ceased, and are, therefore, no longer to be looked for in the ordinance, yet the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit is still bestowed. And Confirmation is to be resorted to, in the hope and belief, that God, Who has already "vouchsafed to regenerate you by water and the Holy Ghost," and has admitted you into that covenant, whereof the gift of the Holy Spirit is one of the chief blessings, will "strengthen you with that blessed Comforter, and daily increase in you His manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and fill you with the spirit of His holy fear now and for ever." (*Confirmation Service.*)

## 2. *Prayer.*

Confirmation, like Baptism, is administered but

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 15—17.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xix. 6.

once. There are other means of grace, some of a private, others of a public description, which are of continual recurrence. Prayer is one. I have already spoken at some length on this subject<sup>3</sup>, and I will not, therefore, do more now than remind you that it is the mainspring of the Christian life. Every thing depends upon your diligence in regard to it. If you become slack and careless in prayer, you will certainly decline in religion, and, if you continue so, you will fall further and further from God, till sin and Satan regain their old power, and more than their old power, over you, and your last state becomes worse than your first. If you are earnest and diligent in prayer, you will as certainly go forward, growing in grace and advancing in holiness, and acquiring more and more conformity to the divine image. You will go from strength to strength till you appear before the Lord in Zion<sup>4</sup>.

### *3. The Study of the Bible.*

To prayer you must join the devout study of the Scriptures. And it will be no slight evidence of the healthiness of your spiritual state, if you value them and take delight in them, "as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby<sup>5</sup>." Let each day, then, as it comes, have its appointed time, if not its appointed times, for reading the Bible. And when you read, read with prayer, with self-examination, and with self-application; read, as remembering that the words are not man's words, but God's.

### *4. Public Worship.*

Another means of grace is public worship. You are now no longer lonely, isolated individuals. You have been admitted into the fellowship of the saints, and you must join with the saints in the offering up of their common prayers and common praises, through

<sup>3</sup> Part ii. chap. iii.

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<sup>4</sup> See Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 2.



their common Saviour, to their common God. Private prayer has its promises, and the private reading of God's Word its advantages; but public prayer, and the public reading and preaching of God's Word, have this promise and advantage over and above, that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's Name, there is He in the midst of them. Moreover, there is a warmth and fervency in public worship beyond what there ordinarily is in private; and the love of Christians towards each other is quickened by the very circumstance of their joining together in the same act of devotion to their common Lord, and of their owning each other thereby as brethren; while their love to their Lord is quickened by the fact, that their meeting together to worship Him is in some sort a confession of His Name, and an acknowledgment that they are not ashamed to be known as His disciples.

Be careful, therefore, to avail yourselves of every opportunity of attending God's house. Let no idle excuses keep you away. And whenever you attend, strive to profit by your attendance. Do not be satisfied with being bodily present. See that your souls are there, and are earnestly intent on worshipping God in spirit and in truth. To secure this, seek by prayer beforehand the Holy Spirit's aid. Go up to the house of God in the spirit of prayer, and maintain that spirit, while you are there, by watching unto prayer; watching against wandering thoughts, and whatsoever might tempt your thoughts to wander.

One piece of advice more let me give you before I leave this head:—Take heed that you be not drawn aside to join in the worship of those who have separated themselves from the Church. You may be much pressed to do so, and have large promises made you of the advantages to be gained by such a course. But remember both the sinfulness of divisions, and the ruinous, soul-destroying tendency of false doctrine. You cannot be present at the worship of which I speak, without countenancing the former, and without run-

ning great risk of being led away by the latter. You are not indeed to pass a sweeping condemnation on all who have separated from the Church. You, perhaps, know nothing of the circumstances under which they separated, nor how many of them may have been brought up to dissent from their very infancy. Still you must not forget the words of the Apostle: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them <sup>6</sup>."

### *5. The Lord's Supper.*

One other means of grace remains to be mentioned, and that means as necessary to the preservation and continuance of our spiritual life, as Baptism was to its commencement,—the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. "If our bodies did not daily waste, food to restore them were a thing superfluous. And it may be, that the grace of Baptism would serve to eternal life, were it not that the state of our spiritual being is daily so much hindered and impaired after Baptism. In that life, therefore, where neither body nor soul can decay, our souls shall as little require this Sacrament, as our bodies corporal nourishment. But as long as the days of our warfare last, during the time that we are both subject to diminution and capable of augmentation in grace, the words of our Lord and Saviour Christ will remain forcible, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.' Life being therefore proposed unto all men as their end, they which by Baptism have laid the foundation, and attained the first beginning of a new life, have here their nourishment and food prescribed for continuance of life in them. Such as will live the life of God must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, because this is a part of that diet which, if we want, we cannot live <sup>7</sup>."

<sup>6</sup> Rom. xvi. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Hooker.

This passage from one of our most eminent writers well explains the nature, and object, and necessity of the Lord's Supper. If Baptism is the Sacrament in which we have our spiritual birth, the Lord's Supper is the Sacrament in which the life there received is nourished and sustained; or, dropping the figure, if in Baptism we enter into covenant with God, in the Lord's Supper, when from time to time we receive it, we renew the covenant then entered into. "This is my blood of the new covenant<sup>s</sup>," our Lord said in instituting this Sacrament. As His blood shed upon the cross ratified the covenant made between the Father and Himself before the foundation of the world, so the wine, which is the symbol and representative of that blood, which stands for it, so to speak, insomuch that it is itself called "the blood of the covenant," ratifies the same covenant between the Father and each individual who partakes of it; yet ratifies it, not as for the first time, but in continuation of what has been begun already in Baptism.

See then, as you desire to maintain the life of God within you, to strengthen your union with Christ, and to grow in grace, that you are punctual in your attendance at the Lord's Table. You can no more hope to prosper in these respects, if you withdraw yourselves or become remiss and irregular in your attendance, than you could expect your bodies to be preserved in health while you withheld from them their proper nourishment, or stinted them in its supply. Only remember that it is not the mere bodily attendance which will avail you. You must bring your whole souls when you come. You must draw nigh in the same spirit in which you presented yourselves at Baptism, earnestly renewing the dedication of yourselves to God's service, while, at the same time, you humble yourselves with unfeigned humilia-

<sup>s</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28. The word translated "testament," used in our version, might in this, and in almost every other instance, have been translated "covenant."

tion for your past breaches of the covenant, and not doubting but that God, for Christ's sake, is ready to accept you, and to make over to you afresh all the benefits which in Christ He bestows upon the sons of men.

These, then, are the principal means of grace which you must use, if you would go forward as you have begun, and walk worthy of the high calling wherewith you have been called. And to these you must add continual watchfulness,—watchfulness against the first beginnings of evil, watchfulness in avoiding those companions, those places, those employments, which have proved occasions of sin to you in times past, or are likely to prove such to you now.

And now see, in conclusion, the encouragement which the word of God holds out to you, while you are thus striving to make your calling and election sure. The work in which you are engaged is a work on which God looks with lively interest. Nay, it is His work. He has begun it, and He will carry it on till the day of Christ. You have indeed your parts to do; and God's part consists in enabling you to do yours, working in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. But if you will only yield yourselves obediently to His influence, and follow His good motions within you, you will assuredly go forward, abounding more and more in all those graces which adorn the Christian profession, and giving, and that increasingly, unquestionable proof of the hidden spiritual life which lives within; and so, through the Redeemer's merits, "an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ<sup>o</sup>."

For what is the bliss of heaven but the ripened fruit, of which the bud and blossom are already beginning to manifest themselves in your hearts and lives? The salvation which is to be enjoyed there is

the completion and perfection of the salvation which is begun here. Is the power of Satan broken here? There it will be utterly destroyed. Is sin forgiven here, yet in such sort that we are always liable to contract fresh guilt? There, not only will all that is past be blotted out for ever, but there will be no possibility of sinning any more. Is the old nature, with its evil lusts and evil tendencies, nailed to the cross of Christ, yet in such wise that it is not wholly dead, but is still liable to revive and regain its strength? There it will be slain outright. The Spirit of God will reign with undisturbed sway in every heart. Every one will be perfectly holy, perfectly conformed to that Divine image in which man was originally created.

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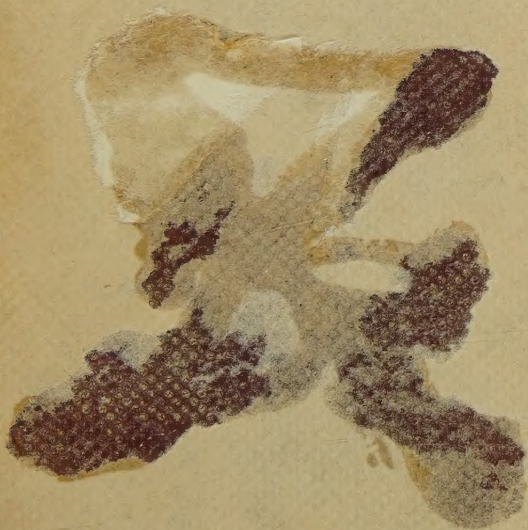
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